

**HAN : FROM BROKENNESS TO WHOLENESS**

**A Theoretical Analysis of Korean Women's *Han* and  
a Contextualized Healing Methodology**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### ***HAN : From Brokenness to Wholeness***

#### **A Theoretical Analysis of Korean Women's *Han* and a Contextualized Healing Methodology**

**Young Ae Kim**

The predominant emotional suffering of the Korean people is called *han*. *Han* is a feeling of deep anxiety and a groaning pain due to the awareness of the human existential condition as finite. Also, *han* is the affliction and agony of the oppressed, particularly of the Korean women, caused by the layers of the dysfunctional patriarchal, hierarchical social structure which force people to be alienated from self, others, nature, and God. If this pervasive pain of the Korean people is to be healed, addressing the *han* of Korean women must be the primary task for a healing ministry.

To heal Korean women's *han*, the fundamental structural problem has to be understood from various perspectives including world-view, and questions have to be raised and answered from Korean women's own life experiences and vision. Therefore, this research is launched primarily from Korean women's experiences, and includes an in-depth study of these experiences in relation to the Korean world-view.

The main body of this dissertation, in addition to the methodological explanation and the definition of *han*, consists of three chapters which explore the fundamental, structural problems of *han*. Those are the socio-historical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of Korean society, and are reviewed particularly from a woman's perspective. The concluding chapter is a proposal of the hypothetical, contextualized healing methods which embrace both Korean traditions and Christianity. This study attempts to integrate traditional healing methods of shamanism rooted in Korean culture and psychological



theories which expand the understanding of human psyche for healing of Korean women's *han* .

This study also presents a theological perspective which embraces both Korean women's *han* and the Korean world-view. The aim of this research is to lay groundwork for further studies in the area of *han*, and to promote more effective healing of Korean women in the future. But, the analysis of Korean women's *han* and Korean spirituality may reveal a possible avenue for the Korean Christian community to engage in building an indigenous theology.

## Acknowledgment

When I started graduate studies a few years ago, I was surprised to hear my own name. My name sounded so strange, as if the name was not mine. I could not see myself as that name. I was nowhere. I was a shadow. I had lost my voice after so many years of efforts to be quiet. I tried very hard not to speak or to hear my inner voice--the voice for my life. In the deepest recesses of my soul, however, I knew that I was crying--crying for life and truth. I was a *hanful* woman, but my *han* was not mine only. It was the *han* of my foremothers and the mothers of my country. I was not an I, I was a we; I was all women who have suffered so long without knowing how to release their *han*.

My studies and this dissertation are an earnest attempt to release my *han*, which may help others to release theirs. My own *hanpuri* cannot be done without entangling the painful nods of other women who experienced *han*. Only when I was deeply immersed in my pain, and understood the root of my *han*, could my *han* touch others. Only when I went down into the abyss of my soul, could I touch others' souls. Only when I understood my culture, could I be connected to other cultures. My genuine hope is that this study, which embraces mine and other Korean women's *han*, may shed a light for other women to create a sacred space for healing.

The healing journey will continue. But I do not have to be *hanful*, since the healing process has already started. It is true that the journey for healing was often full of pain, but there are so many people who have touched me with love and healing power. The ancestors of my people, suffering Korean women, women in other cultures, colleagues, teachers, and friends, have all enriched my life. But most of all, I sincerely want to share my joy of healing with: my spiritual mentor Sundo Kim; my main advisor, Howard Clinebell, Jr., who not only saw the possibilities in me and trusted me in spite of my own doubts about myself to continue my journey, but also encouraged me to open my

eyes to healing for whole creation; Mary Elizabeth Moore who patiently guided me through the period of writing this dissertation with care; and Andrew S. Park who advised me on academic matters and strengthened my shaking confidence. I also want to extend my sincere gratitude to Elaine Walker. Writing a dissertation in English has been difficult for me beyond my imagination. Without her, and her patience, this work could not have been shaped as it is now.

My family was destined to walk with me in my journey. More often they had to share an unfair amount of my pain. But through this process, all of us have grown and become a stronger family with love. I thank my mother who supported me in many ways, and my two sons who have survived successfully in a foreign country. I especially want to thank my husband, Hyo Koo Lee, who had to be separated from the family during my studies, and went through a process of his own liberation, often with pain. Without his support and love, I would not have come this far.

My shell is shattered--my cocoon.  
Shattered is the fear, not me.  
I am flying. I am a butterfly, a wind, a flower, a tree. . . .  
I am You.  
I am We.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

The predominant emotional suffering of the Korean people is called *han*, and *han*, as cultural ethos, penetrates Korean people while shaping the authentic Korean nature. Korean women, however, experience *han* more acutely than men due to various factors. Any study of healing for Korean people, therefore, has to deal with Korean people's *han*, particularly the *han* of Korean women. Nonetheless, *han* has not been studied with a focus on the problem and pain of Korean women. It has usually been studied as a general phenomena among Korean people or as a peripheral problem of the culture. However, if the *han* of Korean women is not dealt with, the possibility of healing among Korean people is questionable since the fundamental structural problem of the society will remain.

Korean society has been rendered dysfunctional due to the power structures which exist among members, particularly between men and women. In unequal relationships between men and women, one gender is limited by the other for the sake of the dominant gender. Consequently, the males, who are the dominant power group of Korean society, have access to almost all of the resource levels as in any other patriarchal society. They define all sectors of the social structure, both visible and invisible, and the whole society comes to believe that the existing system is the only viable one. But women's rising awareness in recent years raises questions regarding this structural problem of the present male-dominated society in various parts of the world, including Korea. That awareness challenges the male-centered civilizations to delve into the core dysfunctional structure of the patriarchal society. Such challenges break the myth that the present system is the only viable structure for human society. In addition, the ecological crisis of the earth calls not



only for critical reflection on the roots of the present social structure, but also forces an immediate commitment toward wholistic healing of the earth and society.

Even though a male dominated society is predominant among various cultures, the fundamental value systems of cultures vary due to different world-views. Generally speaking, the West is rooted in a dualistic world-view, and tends to create a culture of separatism among existences. On the other hand, the East, particularly Korean society, generally has an organic view of the world. It claims connectedness among existences including nature, but the society also has developed a dysfunctional social structure which engenders separatism, classism, and family-centered selfishness. Relatedness becomes hierarchical within this well-organized, social structure. In the West, the system is deified with a theology whereas, in the East, ethics and morality undergird the system and stratify society with classism. Due to its innate nature of power over others, the social structure which divides the powerful and the powerless not only produces the classified, oppressive systems common in various cultures, but also brings forth the depletion of the earth and people, particularly women.

In spite of its wholistic and relational view of the world, the dysfunctional structure of Korean society gives rise to Korean women's pain, *han*.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to Korean's original view, the society has gradually evolved into a class society. The introduction of the metaphysical, patriarchal ideology of Confucianism has made the social structure and people rigid and stifled. Even though *han* is the pain of Korean people, it is more particularly the groaning suffering of Korean women who are forced to be the opposite of what they value most as Koreans--to be relational beings. The fundamental cultural value is connectedness among every existence, particularly among people, but the hierarchical,

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<sup>1</sup> *Han* (한) is a Korean word which describes the authentic emotional feeling among Korean people. There is an identical phonetic word, Han, which is a metaphysical concept. To distinguish between the two, italics will be used to refer to the emotional *han*, and the underlined and capitalized Han will be used to refer to the metaphysical concept.

patriarchal social structure forces Korean women to be separated from others, even from themselves.

Korean Christian women face another contradiction because of Western Christianity's separatist world-view.<sup>2</sup> Christianity was introduced in Korea as a liberating new ideology for the society in confusion, but it was adopted without much critical reflection on the theology which was developed from a male-biased, separatist world-view. Further, the gospel itself has a double message for Korean women: on the one hand it reveals the truth that to be free from worldly oppression is to be liberated with God's loving power; and on the other hand the message binds women because the society's value system based in the Bible reflects the patriarchal aspects of the Old Testament community of Israel and the early Christian community in the New Testament. As a result, Korean Christian women face multiple oppressions from their own society and from their belief in male-biased Christianity. Nonetheless, Korean Christian women perceive Christianity as a liberating power--from their personal experience of God as love and liberator--without a conscious awareness of its internal patriarchal ideology.

Wholistic healing is needed and such healing demands a fundamental, structural transformation. Since it demands a structural transformation of the society which creates various dysfunctions, the healing of Korean women's *han* will help not only Korean women but also other members of the society. Therefore, to decipher the structural problem of Korean women's *han*, it has to be explored from various perspectives in relation to Korean's original world-view, and the healing methods must be constructed on the traditional healing methods of Korean culture with new insights from the psychological fields. Moreover, healing methods for the Christian community have to build upon Jesus' ministry and the church's tradition.

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<sup>2</sup> Generally the dualistic world-view in Western Christian traditional theology contradicts the Korean world-view which is relational and wholistic, and also differs from women's experiences. See Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds. Womanspirit Rising (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 4-5.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to articulate Korean women's reality, particularly that of Korean Christian women, and to suggest a possible wholistic healing which will enable them to live fully their God-given possibility of life. The first step is to understand the culture which influences individual personality as well as society. Every culture has a certain view of the world, and this view shapes people's ways of structuring their lives. The Korean world-view is an archaic shamanistic one which understands the world as a living organism with innate internal connectedness among all existences, including both the living and non-living. The whole universe participates in the process of creation, which is in harmony with God's divine power of creation. Any disconnection from this connectedness causes *han*. Therefore, the healing of *han* in a Korean world-view requires reconstructing a proper relatedness with God, nature, community, and persons which will facilitate the process of becoming whole.

The second step is naming the process by which society is structured for Korean women. This process will reveal how Korean women shape their internal reality within that culture. Accordingly, the socio-historical roots which have shaped Korean history have to be understood as a history of women's oppression from women's perspectives. Further, the psychological process has to be analyzed to understand how the society shapes the inner psychological world of people, particularly of women, since patriarchal society shapes not only Korean women's external world, but also Korean women's inner psychological reality. It is necessary to distinguish the psychological reality of Korean women shaped within the oppressive societal system, and their innate desire to live their lives fully. Another important aspect of human existence is the spiritual dimension of human beings. Spirituality relates persons to the Ultimate, but the manifestation of spirituality and the human response to it varies according to culture. Hence, it is of utmost importance to comprehend the Korean spirituality which has shaped the ethos of the

Korean society in order to understand Korean women's spirituality, and how spirituality, as an essence of being, helps Korean women weave their lives.

The third step is a critical reflection of psychology and the healing methods of the West in order to integrate them into Korean culture for effective healing. Healing is innately related to a people's world-view, and every culture has provided a healing system for its own people out of a deep understanding of their life experience. Intrinsically, psychological theories and healing methodologies in the West are products of Western culture. Applying these methods to Korean women, without searching for common factors or differences, will cause more *han*, rather than facilitate the process of healing. Hence, a suggested healing methodology for Korean women's *han* has to build on their own world-view. In the process of searching for an integrated method, the employment of Western theories is unavoidable since there have not been many psychological studies done on women's issues in Korea. A wide spectrum of theories will be used, however, to reduce the danger of applying the limited scope of a certain theory in understanding Korean women's issues. The aim of this approach is to reveal a relevant, connected structure for further studies.

The fourth step is a reflection on theology from Korean women's perspective. Theology is a believers' understanding of the Ultimate Reality or Power from the perspective of their life context. When theology is rooted in one's culture, it has the power to heal and to empower people. Any theology is only a partial understanding of Ultimate Reality from a certain perspective, and women's experiences have to be told and heard in the process of theologizing, otherwise the understanding will be even more partial and limited.<sup>3</sup> Theology for Korean women has to emerge from Korean soil which is inclusive enough to embrace not only Korean women's experience but also all Korean people's life experience. Unfortunately, Korean Christianity has adopted Western philosophical,

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<sup>3</sup> Nelle Morton explains the need for theologizing women's experiences in The Journey Is Home (Boston: Beacon, 1985), 18.

metaphysical theology without critical reflection, which inevitably fails to provide a connecting point for Korean Christians. The outstanding effort of *Minjung* theology also fails to see underlying structural problems of the society and to contain Korean women's experiences. *Minjung* theology emphasizes political and economic oppressions even though the basis of the oppression is gender related.<sup>4</sup> Although the primary goal of this research is to heal Korean women's *han*, the analysis of Korean women's *han* and Korean spirituality may reveal a possible avenue for the Korean Christian community to engage further in building an indigenous theology. This will facilitate growth both for the Korean people and for Korean Christianity, by expanding their world-view through interaction on a deeper level of spirituality beyond the institutional patriarchal teaching of Christianity.

#### Method of the Study

Even though *han* is a pervasive cultural phenomenon, especially among Korean women, most of the study on *han* has been done in a fragmented fashion by male researchers. But the research on *han*, particularly Korean women's *han*, has to be founded on Korean women's experience and from the women's perspective. This is not to limit the research in any sense, but to eliminate possible biases from male researchers in understanding women's issues.

The method which is employed in this study is storytelling which contains ordinary Korean women's life experiences. It is an effort to understand their *han* and joys of life, their values and hopes, and their motivations which help them to overcome their life struggles. The point needs to be emphasized again that the stories in this research are quite ordinary stories of ordinary Korean women which can be heard easily in Korea.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jean Lipman-Blumen, Gender Roles and Power (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Further studies of Korean women who are considered to be successful in overcoming various obstacles, and who make great contributions to their society, may reveal those women's strengths, pain, and attitudes toward life as compared to ordinary women.

In traditional Korean society, the written documents, art, and philosophy were mainly the product of a male ruling group; but those women who were in the shadow of the society released their *han* through repeating the *han* story of other women while projecting their *han* into it, or retelling their own *hanful* life story. Storytelling has been the main form of talk therapy and a literary art form for Korean women.<sup>6</sup> Carol P. Christ asserts that women's stories have to be told for women to connect their experiences of life to knowledge of themselves. She claims,

Women's stories have not been told. And without stories there is no articulation of experience. Without stories a woman is lost when she comes to make the important decisions of her life. She does not learn to value her struggles, to celebrate her strengths, to comprehend her pain. Without stories she cannot understand herself. Without stories she is alienated from those deeper experiences of self and world that have been called spiritual or religious. She is closed in silence. The expression of women's spiritual quest is integrally related to the telling of women's stories.<sup>7</sup>

Women are so separated from their individual selves that, unless they objectify their feelings and experience in story form and relate to it as a relational object, they can hardly connect with themselves.<sup>8</sup> In their stories, women's pain, the meaning and power of life, hope and despair, and their sense of being human are revealed as they seek a sense of self. Storytelling also helps women connect with each other.

Therefore, the purpose of storytelling in this research is to have data rooted in Korean women's present, concrete life experiences, which are also connected to the past and future. Through the process of analyzing the data, the pervasive theme of Korean women's oppression, pain, and power emerges, which guards against building a theory of *han* from the researcher's own abstract reasoning.

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<sup>6</sup> *Minjung* theology also emphasizes the importance of the story of *minjung* for theological reflection. The main material for this theology is the stories of the oppressed people of Korea.

<sup>7</sup> Carol P. Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing* (Boston: Beacon, 1980), 1.

<sup>8</sup> See Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic, 1986), 25 for the process of women's learning experience which suggests the absence of self as the result of the complete absence of inner dialogue.

### Limitation of the Study

The method in this research has some limitations not because of the method itself, but because of the researcher's limitation. First, the number of interviewees is limited due to the researcher's allocated time in Korea. Another limitation is the lack of previous research in the area which is needed to analyze and build data and theory. Besides these objective limitations, as with any other research, this study carries the researcher's own perspective even though an effort is made to keep a certain distance from the process. Sometimes it carries the researcher's *han* and anger, hope and disappointment, joy of life, and new aspirations for the future. Obviously the study will contain these unconscious feelings of the writer. But no study is totally free from subjectivity and this factor does not always have to be dangerous. Most studies contain the researcher's interpretation, and if the interpretation in this study helps other Korean women live their lives better, it has achieved its purpose.

The phenomenon of *han* itself requires vast research. The attempt in this dissertation is to see the frame of the internal structure of *han* instead of delving into one particular issue. The urgent need in the researcher's mind is to describe a structure which will provide the foundation for further study. Because of the character of this study, it inevitably opens many questions for more focused research at a later time.

The limitation of the study suggests that further research on particular issues and theories will be needed in order to build strong theories from which practical methods can unfold. More studies must be done to support or challenge the theoretical constructs and practical proposals of the present researcher. Only after many attempts to integrate theories and practice in the Korean culture, can the healing of Korean women become more effective. Not only theology and psychology, but various fields such as anthropology, sociology, history, and literature have to collaborate to decipher the cause of *han* and rebuild herstory and culture to re-vision the future for Korean women. Furthermore, a

systematic theological endeavor is needed to develop a theology so that all Korean Christians can be healed of their *han* and empowered in their faith.



## CHAPTER 2

### The Meaning of *Han*

Every culture has historically transmitted its patterns of social and psychological reality, including a belief system. The distinctive characteristics of cultural patterns are shaped through the process of dialectical interaction. People shape their own characters to a culture and shape culture to their characters.<sup>1</sup> Ethos is defined by Clifford Geertz as "the tone, character, and quality of their [a people's] life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood; it is the underlying attitude toward themselves and their world that life reflects."<sup>2</sup> An important ethos of Korean culture is *han*, which is interwoven into every aspect of Korean life.

Many efforts have been made to define *han*, but they are not inclusive enough due to the complexity which emerges from diverse dimensions of society and the complexity of human nature. *Han* also cannot be explained exhaustively because it is the authentic expression of emotion which does not translate exactly into words, particularly into other languages, and is not understood unless one is born into the culture. Thus, this chapter does not claim to offer a full description of *han*, and the working definition proposed below is a tentative one:

*Han* is the Korean people's collective emotion which is embedded in community as well as the individual, and inherited through generations. This repressed, emotional sediment is accumulated through the repetitive process of experiencing multi-layered sufferings, due to existential and environmental conditions which inhibit the community or persons from realizing full potential, and deprive them of means to eliminate or correct the

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<sup>1</sup> Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic, 1973), 93.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 127.

causes. *Han* is also dynamic energy which can be directed, either constructively or destructively, to others or to oneself.

*Han* is an ethos as well as a psychological phenomenon in Korean people. *Han* as Korean ethos is intricately connected with the Korean people's view of their own life, death, and cosmos, since ethos is inherently interrelated with a people's world view. The Korean world-view is generally described as shamanistic, and it still strongly influences the Korean people. In this shamanistic world-view, there is no separation between nature and humans, no split between body and mind, no discontinuity between life and death, no denial of death, or flight from this worldly life. Becoming human is being interconnected with others and nature without discontinuity of time.<sup>3</sup> But this non-dualistic world-view, which conceives the world in a constant process of creating new harmony from the interconnectedness of every existence, creates more acute *han* when this harmonious relationship breaks or is interrupted by other forces.

At its core, *han* is the deep lamentation of being human in the precarious world of separateness created by the social structure and by the human existential condition. *Han* is rooted in both internal and external dimensions of human existence, since a person interacts constantly with the external world while experiencing it internally.<sup>4</sup> *Han* is also deeply related to spiritual dimensions due to the world-view of Korean people and to the fact that human beings are spiritual.

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<sup>3</sup> Pyong-Choon Hahm, "Shamanism and the Korean World-view," Shamanism: The Spirit World of Korea, eds. Chai-Sin Yu and Richard Guisso (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988), 73.

<sup>4</sup> Soon Tae Moon, "What is *han* ?", The Story of Han, ed. Kwangsun Suh (Seoul: Bori, 1988), 151-55. Moon discusses the root of *han* as having been formed by historical invasions, classism produced by Confucianism and sexism. But the fundamental, structural root of *han* --patriarchy--is not discussed.

### Han from Broken Relatedness of the External World

The external cause of *han* has been articulated by *Minjung* theologians whose focus has been on the oppressed people (*minjung*) from sociological, historical, economic, and political perspectives.<sup>5</sup> Young Hak Hyun defines *han* as

a sense of unresolved resentment against injustices suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against, a feeling of acute pain of sorrow in one's gut and bowels making the whole body writhe and wriggle, and an obstinate urge to take revenge and to right the wrong - all these combined.<sup>6</sup>

Chi Ha Kim, a *minjung* poet, describes *han* as "an accumulation of suppressed and condensed experiences of oppression."<sup>7</sup> Nam Dong Suh explains *han* as "an underlying feeling of the Korean people. On the one hand, it is a dominant feeling of defeat, resignation, and nothingness. On the other hand, it is a feeling with a tenacity of will for life which comes to weaker beings."<sup>8</sup> Nam Dong Suh explicates the cause of *han* by saying:

Koreans have suffered numerous invasions by surrounding powerful nations so that the very existence of the Korean nation has come to be understood as *han*. Koreans have continually suffered from the tyranny of rulers so that they think of their existence as *baeksong*.<sup>9</sup> Also, under Confucianism's strict imposition of laws and customs discriminating against women, the existence of women was *han* itself. At a certain point in Korean history, about half of the population were registered as hereditary slaves and were treated as property rather than as people of the nation. These thought of their lives as *han*. These four may be called the fourfold *han* of Korean people.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The definition of *minjung* has been discussed vigorously without a conclusion. See Nam Dong Suh, "A Biographical Sketch of an Asian Theological Consultation," *Minjung Theology*, ed. Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (New York: Orbis, 1983), 35.

<sup>6</sup> Young Hak Hyun, "*Minjung* : The Suffering Servant and Hope," lecture delivered at James Memorial Chapel, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 13 April 1982.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Nam Dong Suh, "Towards a Theology of *Han*," *Minjung Theology*, 64.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>9</sup> *Baeksong* generally refers to common people who do not have political power in a monarchy.

<sup>10</sup> Nam Dong Suh, "Towards a Theology of *Han*," *Minjung Theology*, 58.

Injustice in the society and invasions by other countries have caused *han* in the Korean people and, furthermore, the very fact that people are helpless against the oppressive system has deepened their *han*. For the Korean mind, the oppression and injustice of a person or system against another person or another group of persons breaks the natural, harmonious course of the universe.<sup>11</sup> In a shamanistic world-view, denying the right of other persons' existence as God created beings is rejecting the whole of humanity. It is the violation of the law of the universe.

Since *han* is the pain of the oppressed, the *han* of women is the pain of the most oppressed group. Women, while being forced to support the oppressive system, silently weep and wither without knowing how to break the insurmountable structure, and thus continuously reweave their *han*. Nonetheless, the experience of women--being at the bottom and being connected with humanity--is the sustaining and restoring power for the patriarchal, separatist society which yearns for the reconciliation of broken relationships among existences--human beings, society, nature, and God.

#### *Han* from Broken Relatedness of the Inner World

The cause of *han* is the external world which inflicts pain upon human existence, but the external reality creates inner psychological emotions. A. Sung Park articulates *han* well from a psycho-social perspective.

*Han* is a complex dynamic feeling. . .conscious and unconscious. . . [at its] personal conscious level, *han* takes the form of anger, helplessness, deep mourning, and resentment. At its personal unconscious level, *han* is buried in deep anguish and bitterness. At its collective conscious level, *han* is. . .collective wrath, rage, street demonstrations, and rebellion. At its collective unconscious level, *han* is submerged in the deep silence of racial lamentation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Hahm, 73.

<sup>12</sup> A. Sung Park, "*Minjung* and Process Hermeneutic," Quarterly Review 9, no.1 (Spring 1989): 51.

Since they live in a patriarchal society, Korean women experience increased *han*, which causes illness not only at the psychological level but also in physical forms.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, human existence itself engenders *han* because a human being is vulnerable in the precarious world. A human being is destined to face one's own finitude, as well as the death of loved ones, separation from loved ones, lack of basic human needs, a sense of meaninglessness, and illness. Therefore, society and the fundamental condition of human existence create *han* in Korean people, particularly in Korean women.

#### Han as Existential Anxiety

A human being quests for the meaning of existence. Life is full of ambiguity and absurdity, and one cannot but feel despair with the paradoxical situation as defined by existentialist thought. The process of individual growth also provokes anxiety, and one needs to confront and own this anxiety to realize one's full potentiality. Every human being has the possibility of actualizing his or her potential. Thus, a person's vocation in life is to develop the will to be her or himself.<sup>14</sup> The will to actualize one's potential is a creative decision, based centrally on expanding self-awareness; and freedom depends on how one relates to oneself at every moment of existence.<sup>15</sup> But many people deal with the anxiety of growth by avoiding the responsibility of freedom. Instead of taking full responsibility for their own freedom, which inherently conceives anxiety, persons give up freedom to avoid anxiety. This limits people in realizing their potential, which brings forth more anxiety.

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<sup>13</sup> Many western feminist psychologists have challenged the etiology of psychological distress in women which has been diagnosed as individual symptoms by male-biased psychological theory. Those feminist psychologists argue that the sexual role as a minority group in patriarchal society is the cause of women's psychological sickness. See Susan Sturdivant, Therapy with Women (New York: Springer, 1980), 105-17.

<sup>14</sup> Rollo May, The Meaning of Anxiety (New York: Ronald, 1950), 34-35.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

Not only does human growth produce anxiety, but the death of another person, fear of death, separation from other human beings or the land, and the experience of nothingness provoke existential anxiety. Therefore, *han* is the painful recognition of human limitation. Paul Tillich claims that the basic anxiety is the ontological human condition which cannot be eliminated in life. While fear has an object of the fear, anxiety has no object except a vague uncertainty and the feeling of helplessness in the face of a threat of nonbeing. To overcome this existential anxiety, a person needs courage of self-affirmation and self-centeredness.<sup>16</sup>

*Han* as existential anxiety is deeper in women, since the experience of life for women is different from that of men in certain aspects. According to Tillich, women cannot avoid becoming neurotic since women in patriarchy are not allowed to be self-centered and self-affirming. However, Simone de Beauvoir argues that a human being can realize personal freedom even in a limited situation. If one see a glimpse of the freedom and does not strive for it, it is like a "resignation of freedom not to exploit the possibility, a resignation which implies dishonesty and which is a positive fault."<sup>17</sup> Then, according to Simone de Beauvoir, it is women's responsibility to explore and create the external world by making critical decisions for their lives in the world. The glimpse of hope in a limited situation has been the power to sustain life for many women, but more often the absence of choice with freedom and the absence of the power to be self-affirming create more existential despair among many women.

Although general anxiety in the human life journey is common to most cultures, women experience more anxiety from the developmental process, as well as depression from the conflict between external demands and their internal nature. But the criteria for growth and the purpose of life may differ in different cultures. Generally western society

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 36-38.

<sup>17</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, The Ethics of Ambiguity (New York: Citadel, 1976), 38.

demands woman to be independent, autonomous, and self-centered, but woman's internal nature is more affectionate, relational, and oriented to others.<sup>18</sup> In Korea, personal growth means learning to relate, rather than being an autonomous person. Even though Korean cultural values and women's nature are similar, the will to realize themselves and the need to be confirmed by society create sharp inner conflicts. More often, Korean women are forced to fit into the norm, and the lack of opportunity to choose freely creates a state of general anxiety and depression for women's psyches throughout their lives. Besides the ontological and developmental anxiety, the conflict between internal and external values create deeper anxiety in Western women which become depression. Miriam Greenspan asserts that, "A deep-seated conviction of powerlessness and suppressed rage is what is commonly called depression. It is just the clinical name for one of the individual effects male domination has on women."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, anger, anxiety, and depression are deeper in women not only because they are finite beings, but also because they are powerless in a patriarchal society.

For Korean women, not only is there existential anxiety, but existing as non-beings without freedom to create their own lives also provokes *han*. This *han* will entail either psychological numbness or psychosomatic illness. On the other hand, the experience of nothingness forces a woman to face her own finitude, which leads her to participate in the suffering of other human beings at a deep empathic level. It also enables women to have a keen awareness of the connectedness with the spirituality of the universe. However, being denied one's own individuality creates separateness from one's self as well as from other people. Thus, Korean women need to be centered with a full awareness

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<sup>18</sup> Maffie Scarf, Unfinished Business (New York: Ballantine, 1980), 566.

<sup>19</sup> Miriam Greenspan, A New Approach to Women and Therapy (New York: McGraw Hill, 1983), 194.

of themselves, and with the courage to be themselves in spite of human finitude. They must find the courage to face the reality of their oppressed condition in a patriarchal society.

### Han as Meaninglessness

When a human being does not find meaning in life, one loses the will to live because of an "existential vacuum."<sup>20</sup> As Victor Frankl claims, the meaning of life is the fundamental quest of human existence. In the absence of meaning, one faces despair, which will lead to destruction of oneself. Meaning is engendered in relationships with someone or something.<sup>21</sup> Even though the archaic Korean shamanist world-view is not separatistic, patriarchal structure was developed from its early history and patriarchal ideology was introduced in Korea later. These impose a dualistic view upon men and women, while separating men as superior and women as inferior. In this unequal relationship, the inferior may find that their meaning in life is based on sacrifice for others--only providing for the needs of others. Sometimes the inferior choose an attitude which helps them to transform others' needs into their own in order to have meaning in life. But being available for others in a genuine way demands one's connectedness to oneself. When people can present themselves fully in relationships as whole beings, genuine human relationships can emerge. Korean women who define their meaning in life through relatedness (due to their world-view and their being human), need to connect to their inner selves to be in good relation and to have meaning in their lives. Meaning also has to encompass the spiritual realm. Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade criticize the modern culture for losing its spirituality, resulting in the loss of meaning of life. Korean culture's wholistic view of the world as a huge organic being values the connectedness of all aspects of existence including spirituality, but patriarchal dualism forces brokenness in most of the

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<sup>20</sup> Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (Boston: Beacon, 1962), 106.

<sup>21</sup> Frankl could survive the isolation and hopeless conditions within a concentration camp through fantasy conversations with his wife.



dimensions of a person's life, resulting in the loss of meaning of life and the healthy connectedness to the spiritual world. More often, the reality of broken relatedness has forced Korean women to immerse themselves in a search for the meaning of life in the spiritual domain but, as will be discussed in later chapters, wholeness and meaning of life can be achieved only through the well-balanced connectedness of every dimension of life.

A society which does not promote all members' right to live as God intends for them cannot avoid the perpetual creation of a dysfunctional system. Caught in a vicious circle, Korean women deepen their *han* caused by loss of meaning of life and the broken relatedness with others in the oppressed society--while becoming immersed in an unhealthy spirituality.

#### Han as Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is rooted in the infant's anxiety from an early childhood fear of abandonment, which also creates other psychological feelings such as grief, anger, and guilt.<sup>22</sup> The separation from mother for an infant is the primary process for growing up, and the infant struggles with the feeling of abandonment from the caretaker. Actually, life itself is the continuation of separation and rebirth, and the birth experience itself is the most dramatic trauma of separation which intrinsically contains both fear of life and fear of death.<sup>23</sup> Henry Guntrip argues that the basic need for a person is an object to relate to in a meaningful way.<sup>24</sup> And he also asserts that, "Anxiety is our reaction in the face of any threat of destruction of the possibility of good-object relationships, either by the destruction of ourselves or of our love-objects."<sup>25</sup> A concept of self is formed through the constant

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<sup>22</sup> Scott Sullender, Grief and Growth (New York: Paulist, 1985), 29. Other theorists such as Harry Starck Sullivan, Karen Horney, and Otto Rank all explain the existence of separation anxiety which provokes powerlessness, helplessness, and fear in an infant.

<sup>23</sup> Otto Rank, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero (New York: Vintage, 1959), 267.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Guntrip, Psychotherapy and Religion (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957), 43.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

interaction between self and others,<sup>26</sup> and separation from others is experienced as losing part of the self, which entails intense emotional pain, distress, deep sorrows, and regret.

For Korean people, because of their value system, separation induces acute anxiety accompanied by a penetrating pain and grief. Unlike the West, the value of society lies in strong attachments, relatedness, and dependency among people. Everyone needs one another, and this need forces people to be vulnerable when facing separation from a nexus of emotional ties. Also, the high value Koreans place on worldly life enhances the resentment of death, especially when death occurs without completing the natural life course. For example, the death of a young person, the death of an unmarried person who cannot receive the ancestor ritual from descendents, or an accidental death invokes strong fear because of the dead person's unresolved *han* due to forced separation from life and other people. This separation anxiety and the fear of death is not caused by the negation of death, but by the abrupt discontinuity of life which is against the natural flow of life in the universe. Life in this world and relatedness are so important for Korean people that death creates *han* and, furthermore, an unfinished life of the deceased generates more *han* for the survivors.

Grieving for the dead is the survivor's mourning for the loss of relationship. Acute separation anxiety is felt by the mourners, not the dead. When mourners cry over the dead, attention shifts from the dead to the mourners. Bereavement changes into the pity or pain of the mourners who cannot have any more relationships with the dead. Attribution given to the dead is the projection of the survivors' feelings. For, in the Korean mind, the dead are not dead. The dead live among the survivors, especially when the dead are full of *han*. Korean people believe that a person who has not fulfilled her or his life in this world cannot go to the other world. The dead spirit will be strongly attached to this world, and will live

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<sup>26</sup> George Herbert Mead explains the process of forming selves and minds from social interaction. He describes the "me" as the "generalized other," and "I" as the subjective actor. See Mead, Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

among the family members or other people, interfering with their lives. Only through rituals which facilitate the resolution of the unfinished business will a dead spirit go in peace. It is the responsibility of survivors to help the dead spirit complete the unfinished life. Even the dead needs cooperation and relationships from the living because of her or his strong attachment to the life of this world. The strong desire of the dead to live in this world can be understood as the projection of the survivors' strong attachment to life and relationships with the dead.

The pain of the dead and the survivors is the predominant theme of *han*, but the *han* becomes deeper when the dead have not been able to finish their lives due to difficult, external conditions. For Korean women who nurture family members with utmost care and sacrifice, death or any kind of separation creates more acute pain. Since they exist invisibly, absorbed in relationships, the separation which is the loss of connectedness means the complete loss of themselves. Korean women become more vulnerable in separation; more often they prefer to stay in a relationship even though the relationship is destructive to their lives because of their separation anxiety.

Strong anger, even hostility, exists in *han*. Anger is the direct reaction to separation. In many cases, anger cannot be expressed directly toward the causes. Then the anger is repressed, and it is directed to oneself as self-recrimination, guilt, general irritability, depression or self-destructive behavior, such as suicide. When it is directed to an external cause, a desperate feeling of revenge with hateful malediction demands aggressive behaviors toward others.<sup>27</sup> This aggressive behavior sometimes manifests itself in the practice of magic or exorcism. The anger toward systematic oppressive power leads

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<sup>27</sup> Moon, 145.

Koreans to believe in magical, black spiritual power, since they assume that the sources of systematic evil can be exorcised with a more powerful black spirit.<sup>28</sup>

*Han* is deepened in Korean women because they are not supposed to reveal their feelings, especially negative feelings. Not only can they not express their personal, negative feelings, but in many cases they cannot express their anger because they are unable to identify the causes when these are collective and structural. Mostly, when the object of anger is too grotesque to attack, despair settles in Korean women, and they blame and victimize themselves because they are separated and alienated from life, and forced to be helpless and powerless without any hope or meaning for their lives in a patriarchal society.

#### *Han* as Frustration

Frustration is another common factor in producing *han*. Frustration is "a deep chronic sense or state of insecurity and dissatisfaction arising from unresolved problems or unfulfilled needs."<sup>29</sup> Frustration creates anger, fear, and disappointment. If a person expects consistent frustration in reaching a future goal, fear arises. When a person is frustrated with a certain object or person, anger surfaces. A disappointment comes when frustration has been experienced in the past and the negative result is not repairable.

Aggressive behavior and hostility can be expected when a person is frustrated.<sup>30</sup> These are expressions of spontaneous psychological energy in reaction to frustrations usually caused by unsatisfied relationship with the most desired objects.<sup>31</sup> Thus, if

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<sup>28</sup> Yul Kyu Kim, "*Minwon and Chunwon*," *The Story of Han*, ed. Kwangsun Suh (Seoul: Bori, 1988), 203.

<sup>29</sup> "Frustration," Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.

<sup>30</sup> According to John Dollard's hypothesis, aggression is always a consequence of frustration. See Dollard, *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), 1.

<sup>31</sup> W. Ronald D. Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality* (1952; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 60.

persons fail to relate to others who are important to them, frustration and aggressive behavior follow. Aggressive behavior is an attempt to form healthy relationships with other human beings and the environment. If a person is denied healthy relationships from early infancy, self-esteem diminishes and intense psychological need will appear repeatedly throughout life due to an unfilled need to relate with objects in the external world.

Therefore, when a human being is deprived of an opportunity to form a healthy relationship and build self-esteem through good contact with another human being, one feels guilty and unhealthy while repressing fear, anger, and disappointment.<sup>32</sup> All of these emotions increase when the obstacle becomes too difficult to overcome or the attempt cannot even be imagined. *Han* is accumulated when there is no hope of changing the past or future due to an individual or collective situation. As the definition indicates, frustration is an inevitable emotion for Korean women in their society which does not allow them to share their creativity, value, or hope for their own future.

#### *Han* as Dynamic Power

*Han* is psychological dynamic power and emerges from destructive psychological feelings. When negative feelings are not expressed, they are repressed in the psyche or internalized within the body. Korean people perceive this psychological energy block as the process of *matchida* (knotted or tangled, 맺히다), and the way of releasing this energy as a process of *pulida* (release or let it go, 풀리다).

Since psychological energy per se does not have any directionality or intentionality, personal power will direct the energy either destructively or constructively.<sup>33</sup> Power means that a person has the ability to cause change in the future--the ability to affect, to

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<sup>32</sup> Frederick Perls, Paul Goodman, and Ralph F. Hefferline, Gestalt Therapy (New York: Bantam, 1980), 340-42.

<sup>33</sup> Uh-ryung Lee, as cited in Moon, 145. "*Han* is the yearning for something as inner desire, the desire to achieve the hope. Without this dream, *han* will simply become only despair or revengeful feeling. . . ." Thus, *han* innately contains the hope for life.

influence, and to produce change.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, *pulida* is possible when the cause of *han* is removed through one's power.

Being powerful means to participate in self-affirmation, self-worth, oneness with the world and others, acceptance of one's uniqueness, and trust in one's ability to contribute to the world. These traits will thrust a person into constructive creativity. Power is self-assertion without invading other people's integrity. It is an invitation for others to participate in the constructive, creative process of growing by accepting others' influence, so that intimate relationships with deep spirituality become possible.

Destruction negates the self and others' authentic humanness, thus denying the power in others and the self to construct a new reality. When a community or a person does not have an inner feeling of power, energy easily becomes destructive, taking such forms as deep hatred or a destructive behavior arising from a sense of helplessness, meaninglessness, and unfairness. When persons or communities cannot express or influence their own lives, the intrinsic power within them diminishes as in a state of dying. Susan Griffin writes about women's experience of non-being.

The female self does not disappear, and, even if mortally wounded, does not die, but only exists in a state of dying. Inside our numbness is a terrible memory of pain. Inside our selflessness, a self cramped, angry, aching. Inside stillness, an aliveness battering at the walls of culture.<sup>35</sup>

*Han* is Korean women's deep lamentation derived from a sense of powerlessness, numbness, and speechlessness, from the inability to transform their lives. Consequently, they often direct their energy to the destruction of self. When energy is deeply repressed, the block or hurt cannot be healed. The initial step in claiming the power to transform one's reality is to bring the repressed feelings to a conscious level by feeling the feelings,

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<sup>34</sup> Rollo May, *Power and Innocence* (New York: Norton, 1972), 99-100.

<sup>35</sup> Susan Griffin, *Pornography and Silence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 236.

naming the feelings, and understanding the reality. Therefore, naming *han* ignites the power, since *han* can then be perceived on a conscious level.

### Conclusion

*Han* is the predominant emotional feeling in Koreans, particularly in Korean women, and has permeated every dimension of the Korean people and culture.<sup>36</sup> In addition to the external conditions which provoke *han*, the finitude of the human condition also creates *han*. Moreover, for Korean women, *han* becomes deeper due to the contradiction between a patriarchal society and the Korean value which emphasizes connectedness.

Patriarchy, with an innate oppressive power structure, creates various dysfunctions in human society, separating people into fragmented, selfish individuals, rather than enabling people to live in harmonious relatedness with all of God's creation. This separateness creates acute pain, *han*, which is the psychological emotion that includes separation anxiety, grief, anger, general anxiety, meaninglessness, helplessness, depression, and despair. This state of being usurps the power within a person.

However, the sharp consciousness of human finitude and the injustice of society push people to view humanity and ultimate reality more openly. Being at the bottom of the society under the constant threat of nonbeing, Korean women tend to seek meaning in life and the power to sustain life through spirituality. Thus, *han* is connected to diverse dimensions of life such as cultural values, social conditions, psychological emotions, and spirituality.

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<sup>36</sup> Chi Soo Kim, Kyung Lee Park and Chung Joon Lee, as cited in Moon, 143. This article cites a conversation with Kyung Lee Park about her book, *Jiri Mountain*. She says, "my work relates with *han* . . . whether I am consciously or unconsciously aware of it, there are fundamental existing *han* in human existence. . . every person in my novel has her or his *han* . . . People talk about my work as too much *hanridden* one, but I think even this criticism comes from their own need to avoid their *han*. To me, everybody lives in her or his *han*. It may be death, or separation. . . I think it is the fundamental quest of human existence."

## CHAPTER 3

### Research Methodology and Data Analysis

The research methodologies utilized in this study are storytelling and grounded theory, and the researcher's assumptions in employing storytelling for studying Korean women's *han* are as follows.

First, a society is a multiple-layered, complex system which influences its members, so an individual's experience will manifest not only a personal particularity but also the common ethos of the society. Second, storytelling can be used as a research methodology just as any other quantitative method since it is grounded in human experience, and is the oldest method for transmitting human wisdom. Third, research data provides the basis for truth, and storytelling provides the first-hand data in this study. Therefore, this research respects the interviewee's own understanding of their *han* and is based on verbal expressions to be as free as possible from the interviewer's interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Fourth, the experiences of the interviewees, who are ordinary Korean women, represent the common denominator of Korean women's *han*.<sup>2</sup>

Grounded theory is applied in analyzing the data because it generates a theory from concrete data. The hypotheses of the research can be drawn from the data itself rather than from the writer's a priori assumptions. Even though it is impossible for the researcher to avoid subjective interpretation in analyzing this data, grounded theory serves to minimize such interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup> The data relies strictly on verbal content. Non-verbal data such as emotion, facial expression, or body message is not included.

<sup>2</sup> There are many outstanding women who have achieved their goals of life in Korea in spite of social conditions. But the researcher's assumption is that those women who have succeeded also have experiences common to other Korean women.



## Research Methodology

### Storytelling

Increasingly, feminist scholars in various fields are reflecting critically on the methods and theories of the past. This critical reflection of feminists emerges because male scholars have frequently built logico-deductive theories which claim universal truths across gender and cultures, or have applied the theories derived from men's experience and interpretation to women. For example, Freud's psychological theory, particularly as it relates to the psychology of women, is a grand universal theory which is built on his own experience and interpretation as a Western male. Thus, the methodology of storytelling is used as a research tool to ensure that the experiences of Korean women and their understanding of their experiences, which are expressed in this research, are not reduced.

Storytelling has been one of the most important methods of communication in the history of Korean women. While oppressed by a society, storytelling has been a channel for sharing their *han*. For example, oral tradition and ritual songs are shared with congregated women during a shaman's ritual, and reveal women's *han*. By hearing and understanding others' *han*, with the help of a woman shaman, women can identify their *han* and release it. They find comfort for their *han* by building a common bond.

A life story contains both the particular person's and the community's ethos. The symbolic meaning of a story goes beyond particularity and makes the story relevant to others, taking on its own life through generations of transmission. Therefore, the life stories in this research carry personal particularities and the common communal experience beyond personal particularities.

Procedure for conducting the interviews. The stories in this research are collected from twelve married Korean women who live in the United States and Korea, and whose ages range from 30 to 70. The number of interviewees is limited; however, the analysis of

data by grounded theory minimizes the possibility of misinterpretation.<sup>3</sup> The age range of the interviewees also is limited, but the researcher's assumption is that women will experience *han* more deeply after their marriage, especially in Korean culture.<sup>4</sup> Because of the society's value system, almost all women marry. Further study of unmarried women is needed to determine such things as the reasons for their decision, how they adjust in Korean culture as single women, and the main difficulties they encounter.

In each age category (30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60- 70), the women interviewed are both religious and nonreligious by their own self-description; they represent various educational, social, and economic backgrounds. In most cases, the researcher visited their homes to make them feel comfortable, and heard their life stories after the researcher read them the questions to help them understand the interview. (See Appendix.) Without making the flow rigid, the researcher guided the story only when it deviated too much from the questions or repeated the same contents. The researcher respected the interviewees freedom as much as possible and let them share their stories without overt intervention.

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<sup>3</sup> Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (New York: Aldine Publ., 1967), 23.

<sup>4</sup> The data of mental patients who were hospitalized and discharged at Seoul National University Hospital during 1970-73 shows that 75.6% were female, 86% were married, and 33.3% were in their 30s. The mean age of patients was 33.7 years in 1945-60. The predominant causes for mental illness were: relationships with mothers-in-law; husbands; husbands' family members; not having a son; and the general overload of work and economic instability. See Bou-Yong Rhi, "Psychological Problems among Korean Women," Virtues in Conflict: Tradition and the Korean Women Today, ed. Sandra Mattielli (Korea: Royal Asiatic Society, 1977), 129-30.

Other research shows that the 28 housewives who were psychiatric patients during 1984-85 suffered from value conflict after marriage--conflict regarding the husband's authority, uncertainty of the future when they would become a mother-in-law, conflict with a mother-in-law, and the husband's infidelity and double ethical standard for women. Their reasons for marriage were having no other ways to live, lack of economic self-support, and thinking that it was just fate. Hae Kyung Han, "The Study on Korean Wives' Conflict," Open Society. Independent Women [Seoul] 2 (May 1986): 471-77.

See also Walter R. Grove, "Mental Illness and Psychiatric Treatment among Women," The Psychology of Women, ed. Mary Roth Walsh (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 110. This article discusses societal factors which contribute to higher rates of mental illness in women, especially among married women.

Most interviews lasted about two and a half hours and were conducted in the Korean language. The contents were translated into English by the researcher.

### Grounded Theory

The research tool for analyzing the data is based on grounded theory, which generates theory from data by the technique of comparative analysis. This methodology helps to generate conceptual categories from the data by comparative analysis, which eventually leads to a theoretical hypothesis. This is different from quantitative methods which are designed to test a hypothesis.<sup>5</sup> Instead of beginning with the researcher's pre-assumptions and theoretical hypotheses about an issue, this method draws the issue from actual data so that the data is analyzed and the theoretical hypothesis is drawn from the analysis.

First, preliminary interviews were conducted with three women who appear to be in quite different external situations. The interviewees were asked simply to tell their life stories, but all of them readily identified their stories as *hanful*. These interviews were held not to make any assumptions about Korean women's *han*, but to grasp the broad conceptual structure of *han* from these women's lives as a guideline for later interviews. These interviews provided the researcher with a framework from which to develop questions. The effort was made to create questions which were inclusive enough to cover various important areas of women's lives and significant enough to understand Korean women's *han*. But the questions in the appendix were used only as a guideline, and interviewees were allowed as much freedom as possible to express their *hanful* stories.

After conducting the interviews, the contents of the stories were coded into as many categories as possible in order not to delete any data which might be viewed as insignificant by the researcher. Coded data were carefully reviewed to determine emergent categories. And all coded data was compared to the emergent categories. If data did not fit into

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<sup>5</sup> Glasser and Strauss, 23-31.

categories, further categorizing was necessary. In this process, however, the researcher's judgment in choosing data was unavoidable in spite of efforts not to influence the process with the researcher's bias. For example, in the first level of coding, the researcher had to decide what data was relevant enough to be included even though it might not show any explicit significance in itself or in relationship to other data.

As the coding and categorizing continued, the comparison among categories was shifted to a comparison among the properties of categories, which would reveal the theoretical relationships.<sup>6</sup> As the process advanced, coding and analysis of incidents was more selective and focused. In this process, delimiting was unavoidable at the category and theory level. Finally, theoretical relationships were formulated with a smaller set of higher level concepts by identifying underlying uniformities in the original set of categories or their properties.<sup>7</sup>

### Data Analysis and Results

#### Categories of the Interview Data

First level of categories. First, all data (action, feeling, expression, etc.) was coded. The effort was to retain as much data as possible, but some deletion of data which seemed to be quite insignificant was necessary. Coded data was delineated into as many categories as possible, and yet the categories had to provide an internal relationship as an organizing principle. For example, there were various coded data under the category of Korean War, such as poverty, loss of family, hard labor, ideological conflict among Korean people (sometimes within a family), and labeling of persons as communist by the government.

Second level of categories. The first level of categories were classified further, creating an upper level of categories. For example, there were various first levels of categories which were related to conflict with the interviewees' parents. These first level

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 110.

were categorized further under the category of "*Han* from Conflict with Parents." At this level, the comparison still remained at the level of content. The following descriptions show both the first and second levels of categories.

### 1. *Han* from Socio-historical Conditions

- Japanese rule: poverty, women's excessively hard labor, young women forced to marry to avoid becoming prostitutes for Japanese soldiers.
- Korean War: poverty, loss of family, hard labor, ideological conflict among Korean people (sometimes within a family), government's accusation of persons as communists.
- General social conditions: farmers' extreme poverty due to economic system, prevalent poverty of lower class from lack of welfare system, unequal distribution of wealth, hard labor and poverty after husband's sudden death or inability to work (without society's support or welfare).

### 2. *Han* from Conflict with Parents

- Pain experienced from father's physical and psychological abuse toward the mother.
- Anger and suffering because of father's irresponsibility toward his family caused by addictive behavior such as gambling, drinking, or womanizing.
- Father's selfishness and discrimination against daughter.
- Pain from poverty due to father's inability to support family.
- Treatment from family as a non-being because of the birth order
- Lack of a close relationship with father.
- Deep resentment toward mother for her attitude toward her daughter.
- Pain from mother's physical and verbal abuse of her daughter.
- Pain from watching mother's hard work and sacrifice.
- Anger and guilt toward overprotection of mother.
- Lamentation on women's fate caused by a mother sharing her *han* with her daughter.
- Hate and love relationship from mother-daughter symbiosis.
- Hate for mother's control over daughter's life.
- Shame from fact that the mother was the second wife.

### 3. *Han* from Married Life

- Conflict with husband's family, especially with mother-in-law.
- Suffering caused by mother-in-law's severe treatment.
- Pain from the heavy responsibility of taking care of husband's family, her own family, and the children's family, sometimes including the whole extended family.
- Frustration from receiving no understanding from husband's family.
- Humiliation from improper treatment as a decent human being.
- Acute pain from husband's infidelity, womanizing.
- Pain and difficulties from husband's sudden death.
- Heavy responsibility for family's survival due to husband's incompetence as a breadwinner.
- Humiliation and pain from husband's physical and psychological abuse.
- Pain from husband's humiliating attitude toward wife.

- Conflict from husband's personality and authoritarian attitude.
- Frustration from stereotyped gender role for women.
- Double burden being a widow due to society's attitude toward widows (scapegoating), especially from female friends.
- Uneasiness about the traditional concept of marriage.
- Frustration from not having a divorce due to the social norm.
- Injustice against women for denying custody of children to women after divorce.
- Shame from husband's treatment in front of child.

#### 4. Han from Their Children

- Desperate feelings of disappointment caused by children.
- Pain in watching her daughter becoming a seductive woman as she was.
- Pain in seeing her son become violent like his father.
- Acute pain from the inability to feed and educate her children.
- Pain from son's suicide and guilt for not taking better care of him.
- Inner conflict between feeling love for her children and burdened bondage.
- Disappointment in her fate because her entire life is consumed by an illegitimate child.

#### 5. Han from Concept of Self

- Pain from having no identity.
- Shame about herself because of having no identity except belonging to her husband.
- Feeling of emptiness from not living her own life, as if nothing is left for her.
- Desperate, painful feelings about her life such as helplessness and nothingness.
- Facing herself and deep disappointment in herself.
- Regret about not accomplishing anything in life.
- Struggle with low self-esteem.
- Painful reality about herself for wearing a mask of split personality.
- Painful process of searching for oneself on an individual journey.
- Hatred toward herself from her childhood pain.
- Hatred toward herself for having a dirty life as a prostitute.
- Shame of being herself.
- Finding herself becoming like her parent whom she hates.
- Pain from finding herself repeating her mother's life.
- Guilty feeling about abortions which were unavoidable.
- Guilt for her dead son and husband, and for knowing a man after her husband's death
- Acute pain from not having gone to college, which led to self hatred and suicide attempts.
- Regret for loss of opportunity to study more.
- Strong resentment and regret for not having a good education.
- Guilt and pain from leaving home for her own growth.
- Constant anxiety for her future in old age, due to social change.
- Existential anxiety and doubt about life.
- Loneliness.

#### 6. Strengths and Weaknesses

Causes of weakness:

- Various emotional and physical ailments.
- Suffering from various psychosomatic diseases.

#### Resources for strength:

- Hope to raise, educate, provide better life for children
- Responsibility to support family.
- Need to do her best for her family.
- Determination do her best in life under any conditions.
- Reverence for life and the continuity of life.
- Effort to find her own identity.
- Strong desire to keep her own integrity and dignity.
- Effort to prove herself.
- Inner power to realize oneself.
- Becoming patient and understanding, with openness for other's pain from experiencing her own pain.
- Deep understanding about the importance of love, connectedness, humbleness, *chung* (deep empathic feeling) among people.
- Faith community support.
- Belief in God.

### 7. Belief System

#### Concept of God:

Immanent, transcendent, protector, guider, companion, justice, liberation, peace, comforter, joy, forgiveness, close relatedness, appreciation of the universe, nature, depth, love, power, gracious, central value of life.

#### Ways of Experiencing God:

- In dream, prayer, studying the Bible, conversation with God, connectedness within faith community, participating in church activities.
- Through complete submission, obedience, surrender, absolute trust in God.
- As mother love, feel close to Virgin Mary, Jesus as Friend, understanding God as above images.
- Anger toward God when life's pain is too terrible, but then experience God as love.

#### Effect of Experiencing God:

- Experiencing pain as the dynamic power for transcending immediate problem.
- Understanding suffering as channel to the experience of encountering God, understanding the meaning of life, the ability to understand other human being's pain.
- Positive attitude change for life.
- Acceptance of present condition.
- Metanoia from selfishness to God centered.
- Understanding the human existential condition.

#### Various Functions of Faith:

- Healing.
- Relieves guilt through forgiveness.
- Restores self-esteem.
- Restores broken relationships.
- Gives support and sustaining power to overcome painful situations.
- Role of faith community as practical helper.
- Empowerment.
- Provides meaning of life.
- Help to experience peace and love in life.

- Gives stability during emotional turmoil.
- Resolves existential anxiety.
- Become courageous without fear of life.
- Help to accept the present reality and empowerment to overcome the hardships, while providing hope for the future.

#### Negative Effect of Christian Faith:

- Negative feeling from problems in institutional church or faith system.
- Provokes unnecessary guilty feeling from women on such issues as abortion.
- Authoritarian attitude of male pastors and uneasy feelings toward them.
- Faith community as a negative group, being judgmental instead of giving love in times of difficulty.
- Emphasis on complete obedience not just to God, but to church and to male church leaders.
- Instead of prophetic function, church helps people adjust to the system in spite of its injustice.
- Emphasis on miracle healing only, and neglecting other functions of faith system.

#### View on Life after Death:

- Continuity of present spiritual life after death.
- Real hope of being with God in heaven.
- Wish to be buried with ancestors.
- Present pain from ancestor's sin.
- Do not want to be reborn either in present world or in other world.  
(Even the possibility of meeting present husband is threatening.)

#### 8. Future Hope

- How can I help others?
- To realize herself in order to help others.
- To build nursing home to help poor elders.
- To raise the children and to be a perfect wife.
- Hope to be independent financially.
- Hope to change the society which will respect people not just for their education but for their integrity.

Third levels of the categories. The second level of categories described the main sources for Korean women's *han*. While the principle of identifying the second level of categories still remains at the level of direct content comparison, the principle of the third level of categorization shifts from content comparison to the internal relationships of the properties of the second level. Therefore, in the third level of categories, the higher level of saturated properties emerges.

- Poverty and hard labor.
- Social norm which oppresses women.
- Inequality between men and women
- Prevalent violence within family system.
- Victimization of women.
- Women's internalization of social value against themselves.
- Loss of own identity.



- Strong motivation for growth.
- Existence of persistent power to live.
- Connectedness with family members and community.
- Human existential quest.
- Faith system as positive and/or negative role.

Fourth level of data comparison. The third level of categories were categorized further according to the higher level of saturated internal properties. From the third level of categories, final categories emerged for a theoretical hypothesis. These theoretical categories were categorized further into three main bodies and sub-categories for the purpose of organizing a theoretical hypothesis. Due to this process, the theoretical hypothesis contains not only the property of third and fourth levels of categories, but also are inclusive enough to hold all the properties of the data. The theoretical part of Korean women's *han* is divided into three main parts: socio-historical, psychological, and spiritual. Under these main parts were placed subtitles which include the fourth level of categories.

First, the root of *han* is in the social structure emerging from the beginning of Korean history. Historically, Korea was invaded many times by neighboring countries, which resulted in various losses and pains, such as: death of family members; plundering of possessions; and severe poverty which forced women to take responsibility as heads of households. Even though the patriarchal ideology of the society is designed to protect the family through the father as head, poverty has forced women to perform hard labor--more often as head of the family--while society does not accept women as wage earners.

The patriarchal, ethical norm of Confucianism was introduced in Korea to reinforce the country's own budding patriarchy.<sup>8</sup> The family system was rigidly built on the inequality of men and women which demanded women's absolute sacrifice. This has been one of the sources of women's *han* and it still strongly influences the lives of Korean women. Patriarchy, which exists virtually all over the world, creates various forms of

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<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza defines patriarchy as "a pyramidal system and hierarchical structure of society and church in which women's oppression is specified not only in terms of race and class but also in terms of 'marital' status." See Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone* (Boston: Beacon, 1984), 5. The historical background of patriarchy in Korea will be discussed in the next chapter.

violence due to its innate structural, dysfunctional system. Such violence includes sexual abuse, domestic violence, societal violence, wars, the building of nuclear armaments, and the exploitation of the earth. Thus, the first theoretical concepts for analysis of Korean women's *han* will be the historical background of Korea, the ethical norm of the society, and the root of violence and power within the system.

Secondly, women suffer both external oppression from society and internal conflict due to the internalization of social values. A woman has no right to claim her place in a patriarchal society except by fitting into the role designated by society, and she never has the power to name her own experience and knowledge. Deeply believing in the given norm, she suffers from the inner need to have her own life while creating deep *han* in her soul. She lives in a confined and confused world without self-identity, and is driven into psychosomatic illness and emotional problems. Anger often perpetuates a woman's victimization as she blames herself or another victimized woman. Thus, how a woman develops her identity, why she does not have her own identity, and the question of the vision of self which enables her to live form the second theoretical hypothesis which can explain Korean women's *han* from a psychological perspective.

Thirdly, spirituality has exerted enormous power upon the lives of Korean women as they do not have as much freedom in other areas of life as in spiritual life. Spirituality has empowered suffering Korean women to envision the future in spite of their immediate calamities in the world. While spirituality, including Christianity, strengthens Korean women, more often belief in God forces women to accept their reality as God-given because the religious institutions are the creation of patriarchy and have been a source of the oppression of women in the world. For example, some Korean women internalize the Church's teaching faithfully without knowing that this causes them to be more oppressed by their faith. However, many women have the patience to hear their inner voice as they try to understand God from their own experiences; then the experience of God becomes their source of strength and passion for life. Being oppressed, their deep connection with

other human beings leads them to participate in creating humanity. But, the injustice of the world makes women angry and often their anger blocks them from God. And their anger also blocks their ability to see the reality by pacifying them with spiritual euphoria.

This is a brief description of the main bodies of theoretical hypotheses which are drawn from the data by the grounded theory. Under these main bodies, the fourth level of categories will be discussed in detail which will embrace the issues interviewees have raised. From the methods of storytelling and grounded theory, the research will be grounded in the first-hand, life experiences of common Korean women.

## CHAPTER 4

### Theoretical Analysis of Korean Women's *Han* from a Socio-Historical Perspective

From the very beginning of her history, Korea has been invaded constantly by China and Japan, which forced the country into poverty and the people to be *hanful*. The colonization of Japan from late Yi Dynasty until World War II and the Korean War left deep scars on many Korean people which still draw their shadows upon them. War left poverty, widows, orphans, homeless, and families who are still divided between South and North. The political situation and unequal distribution of wealth have also created another group of *hanful* people.

Korean women have suffered from their country's tragic fate as powerless political victims, just as other members of the society. But they have suffered doubly by being women in a patriarchal society, because the ideology has shaped a family structure and society with a double sexual standard and a double ethical value for different genders. Violence is inevitable since patriarchy is innately based on classes and hierarchy, separating people into the powerful and the powerless, which cannot avoid coercion in the process. As a result, violence is a rampant phenomenon in present Korean society.

The data in this research also reveals the root of Korean women's *han* in society which was impregnated from early history. Although it would be necessary to study every sector of the history and society in order to completely comprehend the socio-historical background of *han*, only those issues which emerged from the data will be discussed.

In the following section, the history of patriarchy in Korea from the prehistoric period until the present is discussed. The intention is to perceive how Korean society has influenced Korean women's lives throughout her history, and to decipher whether

patriarchy innately corresponds to the Korean world-view. Since philosophy undergirds the social structure, philosophical concepts are discussed in addition to a historical review. Due to patriarchy's innate coercive nature, the society cannot avoid violence both at the individual and group level as the data in this study reveals. Social structure shapes the world-view, value system, and family system, and a structure based on separatism inevitably creates sexual and domestic violence. Hence, in order to understand Korean women's reality, this chapter examines the socio-historical background of Korean society, the philosophical concept, particularly that of Confucianism, and the psychological exploration of the nature of violence and its impact on Korean women's lives.

### Patriarchy and Korean History

Korean history is the history of the development of a patriarchal society. Even though there seemed to be times when both men and women were considered equally, the Korean patriarchal structure appeared when the society started to form political institutions. The social and political institutions interacted to enforce each other's settlement. The ideologies of both systems have the same fundamental structure so that each ensures the power of the dominant group. Reviewing the historical background of Korean society provides an understanding of how patriarchy in Korea has progressed to enforce the oppression of Korean women.

### Prehistoric Period

Historians are not clear when people started to inhabit the Korean peninsula; however, according to archaeological findings, it can be assumed that people lived there as early as the Paleolithic period or even earlier.<sup>1</sup> Since there have not been many studies done on this period of Korean history, the social structure of this period will be investigated by studying the theoretical hypotheses of Western scholars. The assumptions of this approach are: early human cultures probably had similar structures because they

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<sup>1</sup> Ki-baik Lee, A New History of Korea (Seoul: Iljogak, 1989), 9.

were less developed than later cultures; and human beings seem to share similar processes of evolution and possess common traits. Therefore, human culture probably began in a similar fashion across cultures. Also, discoveries in later periods show many common characteristics from which the existence of similar cultures in the earlier periods of human existence can be predicted.

Besides the effort to rebuild a picture of the social structure of this period, a few scholars have questioned the origin of the present patriarchal social structure and the possibility of a prehistoric existence of social structures other than patriarchy. Many explanations have been attempted from various perspectives, but the development of patriarchy is an intricately interwoven process which cannot be explained easily. Furthermore, there is little concrete data about early human culture on which to build such a theory. Thus, mostly archaeological materials are employed to reconstruct the forgotten history.<sup>2</sup>

Riane Eisler advocates that the existence of a female-centered, gatherer-hunter culture was the original form of human culture. She challenges the previous interpretations of discoveries, particularly drawings. She asserts that the women figure has been interpreted as relating to hunting, but it has to be interpreted as ritual dancing in female worship. Moreover, the cave paintings found do not have vegetation symbols even though the society was heavily dependent on vegetation. The new interpretation is that the symbol, which was interpreted as a hunting or war weapon, actually represents the branches of vegetables. Thus, instead of the existence of a war culture in the Paleolithic age,

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<sup>2</sup> A few feminist archaeologists have tried to reconstruct the Paleolithic period from the cave art found from Eastern Europe to Siberia which includes paintings, sculpture, lunar and seasonal calendars, and other symbolic figures such as female figurines, and women's body symbols such as breasts and vulvas. See Hallie Iglehart, *Womanspirit* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 12-13. The chart of the cultures of Europe and the Mediterranean world in this book (from early Paleolithic to modern society) is helpful to understand the development of patriarchy from various aspects.

agriculture and female worship were the central activities of the people.<sup>3</sup> From the study of various art works in different areas and burial sites in Minoan Crete,<sup>4</sup> Eisler concludes that a matrilineal society existed in which male dominance was not the norm, but that society valued equality among group members.<sup>5</sup> Women were central figures in the paleolithic period, and their power of fertility was revered as sacred; this led to Mother Goddess worship. According to Marija Gimbutas, even in the Neolithic period, female Goddess worship was predominant because of women's power.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Judith Ochshorn argues that even in Greek civilization, female goddesses still existed and both female goddesses and male gods coexisted without much conflict. Both goddesses and gods depended on each other, and sexual activity was viewed as a sacred act of creation as goddesses and gods created the world.<sup>7</sup> Hence, in the early Paleolithic period, the culture was a female-centered one with female goddess worship which was more egalitarian and harmonious.

In the late Neolithic age (9,000 to 8,000 B.C.E.), the agricultural revolution occurred, which shifted the simple social structure to a more complex form. Technology in areas such as irrigation entailed advanced skills and this included other areas of life such as weaving, crafting, producing objects with clay, painting, and the acceleration of trade.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Riane Eisler, The Chalice and the Blade (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 1-4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 11-30.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 28. The study reveals age differences only in size of residences and locations of the sleeping platform, but does not show any gender or status hierarchy.

<sup>6</sup> Marija Gimbutas, "Women and Culture in Goddess-Oriented Old Europe," Weaving the Vision, eds. Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 63. Gimbutas explicates that the temples were built from the seventh millennium B.C.E. and various miniature models, including female clay figurines with elaborate decoration, have been found.

<sup>7</sup> Judith Ochshorn, The Female Experience of the Nature of the Divine (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 29-71.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 10.

Besides the agricultural revolution, both Gimbutas and Eisler postulate that the radical change in the social structure in Western Europe was due to warfare, which replaced partnership as a dominant model in this period. This was brought about by seminomadic, horse-riding steppe people who placed a high value on power, masculinity, destruction, and death, and who conquered the Neolithic, agricultural European people. This seminomadic pastoral society, which settled in agricultural Europe, consisted of small male-centered units where the power to execute decisions for survival belonged to men.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to archaeological theories, hypotheses also emerge from sociological, economical, and political perspectives. Gerda Lerner attempts to explain that women's childbirth and childrearing ability, which needed to be protected for the group's survival in the Neolithic period, is the starting point of women's subjugation as well as the slave system. It resulted in women being stolen from other tribes to keep and produce a labor force for one's own tribe, which gradually led to a warrior culture. This created the enslavement and exchange of women who were stolen during the war. Subordination of women became institutionalized. Nonetheless she argues that women, women's power, and women's work were highly valued in this period of civilization.<sup>10</sup>

Dolores La Chapelle, in contrast to the view that agriculture advances human history, argues that the gatherer-hunter way of life provided a better quality of food. Because sexual activity became an ongoing one which played a bonding role for tribes, the population grew. Human population devastated natural sources of food, so that to supply food intensive agriculture was necessary. As a result, a large labor force and increased agricultural output was needed for more production, and a larger labor force and increase in the population demanded more food. It became a vicious cycle. In order to be secure,

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<sup>9</sup> Gimbutas, 70. See also Merlin Stone, When God Was a Woman (New York: Dial, 1976), 49 for the invasion of northern nomadic people, who later acculturated with existing, early Greek culture.

<sup>10</sup> Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Patriarchy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 38-51.



some people tried to gain more labor power by owning other human beings, and patriarchal ideology emerged.<sup>11</sup>

Frederick Engels constructs a theory on the origin of patriarchy from an economic perspective.<sup>12</sup> He argues that the early tribal community was a communal property-owning group which shared labor and production equally among its members regardless of sex. There was no distinctive separation between family and societal activity, and women had the same rights as men in political and economical domains. The domestication of animals changed the communal society to a private, family centered one, because animals have the property of self-generation. The economic structure changed from production and consumption to the accumulation of products. Surpluses were exchanged by men in public and women worked at home. According to Engels, domestication of animals was men's work. By having economic power, a man with private property had the power to buy other men's labor. Unlike agricultural products which were shared by community members equally, private property (domesticated animals) became transferrable which created patrilineal inheritance. The change in the economic structure of the society not only separated men's and women's domains, but also created classes. Classism and sexism are closely related. But Karen Sacks, on the other hand, argues that creation of a class society led to the separation of men's and women's domains.<sup>13</sup> A few men with property exploited men's labor because women, who had to bear and raise the children, were not readily available to work outside the home. As a result, women were restricted to home,

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<sup>11</sup> Dolores La Chapelle, "Sacred Land, Sacred Sex," Healing the Wounds, ed. Judith Plaskow, (Philadelphia: New Society Publ., 1989), 157-58.

<sup>12</sup> See Friedrich Engels, The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State (New York: International Publ., 1972)

<sup>13</sup> Karen Sacks, "Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production and Private Property," Women, Culture and Society, eds. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1974), 207.

and their domain was limited to activities of the household. Women were excluded from public activities and placed at the bottom of the social pecking order.

Stephanie Coontz and Peter Henderson also suggest another hypothesis to refute Engels's theory, that the origin of patriarchy is the accumulation of private property. They suggest that the primary factor in the origin of women's subjugation precedes the formation of private property.<sup>14</sup> Accumulation of property by a group requires distribution of the wealth and allocation of the labor appropriately among members. From a kinship society a unilateral family system and post-marital residence rules arise. These determine both gender and age relations. The post-marital rules which dictate that a wife move to her husband's home, endow men with women's productive and reproductive power, which leads to a hierarchy with the senior male having the highest power. Because of seniority and power relationships, an older woman can benefit from this system even though she has to pay the price of early marriage; but she does not have access to property as men do. By owning more women, a group can expand its power. As a group becomes stronger and more productive, it requires a more efficient way of controlling labor power in order to establish a stable state. The effective means for the accumulation of wealth becomes man's coercive control over women, children, and some other men. Women's oppression and the class system are not separable. Therefore, patriarchy emerges not from biological functions of men and women, but from a social economic exchange system.

The hypotheses discussed above shed light on a certain aspect of the development of early patriarchal structures. Those aspects help to depict early Korean society. The history of Korea includes the factors mentioned above: the worship of female goddesses; the immigration of nomadic people from northern Asia; growing indigenous patriarchy; and a marriage system. But, the diversity and complication of social structures in history tell us

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<sup>14</sup> Stephanie Coontz and Peta Henderson, eds., Women's Work, Men's Property: The Origins of Gender and Class (London: Verso, 1986), 39-42.

that all of these aspects may have interacted with and influenced one another.<sup>15</sup> We cannot finally know exactly what happened in history and how women became subordinated to men in spite of women's fertility and spiritual power, and their influence in community life. Also, most theories fail to explain why men, not women, controlled the economic and political process and how this unequal, dysfunctional system was sustained for such a long period of time. What can be learned from the research above is that women were not always devalued because of gender. Rather, women in early civilization were often appreciated and considered important because of their procreative power and functions in the community. We see that the feminine principle in early female-centered societies was to be a harmonious part of nature. These societies might have been more life affirming, less conflictual, and without hierarchical strata as shown in a Minoan Crete city. Thus, various female scholars' studies lead to the belief in the possibility of a social structure different from the present, oppressive system. We also realize that patriarchy entails various oppressions upon people: sexism, classism, political and economical oppression.

#### From Kochoson to the Koryo Period

Even though an egalitarian society may well have existed in early Korean civilization, patriarchy settled in Korea from the early stage of her history.<sup>16</sup> First of all, after the Paleolithic and Neolithic ages, the ancient tribal community of Kochoson appeared at the beginning of the Bronze Age in southern Manchuria.<sup>17</sup> The Kochoson seemed to have a patriarchal system from its formation as a tribal community. It generated a class

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1-42. See criticism of various theories on the origin of patriarchy by Coontz and Henderson.

<sup>16</sup> Archaeological findings of tools made of stone, bone, and wood go back 30,690 years in Korea. There are also typical comb-marked pottery similar to those found in northern Europe and Siberia. See Young-Chung Kim, ed. and trans., Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Times to 1945 (Seoul: Ewha Women's University Press, 1977), 3. Even though there are not many clay female figurines in this early period, a female figurine and human figurines made of bone reveal the fact that the worship of female power goes even farther back to the tribal period. See Ki-baik Lee, 50.

<sup>17</sup> There were several tribal communities in the Korean peninsular, but Kochoson (4 B.C.E.) was the main one that continued to exist in later historical periods.

structure and private property from a surplus of food and labor. Also, ancestors of the Korean race were closely related to the people in Central Asia, Mongolia, and Manchuria who were the steppe people. We can assume that the Korean race was also strongly influenced by these pastoral people's culture.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the Han (漢) dynasty of China invaded northern Kochoson which was the beginning of the long history of invasions on the Korean peninsula.<sup>19</sup> Han (漢) not only invaded the territory, but also introduced an ideology which was already a highly developed patriarchal, philosophical concept.

Three articles of the criminal code of Kochoson strongly indicate the existence of a formal political system.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the code, the appearance of dolmen (large, stone burial sites) indicates the development of a ruling class in the Bronze Age because dolmen required substantial manpower to build. Speculation regarding the development of private property, slavery, patriarchal rule, and polygamy can also be made due to the evidence of the better known legal customs of Puyo (in northern Manchuria). Kochoson and Puyo seem to share a similar culture except for the practice of a younger brother's marriage to the deceased brother's wife in Puyo.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, patriarchy already had begun to exist in Korea from the period of the Bronze age.

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<sup>18</sup> Tong Shik Ryu, Hankook Mukyoeui Yuksawa Kuzo [Structure and history of Korean Shamanism] (Seoul: Yunsei University Press, 1986), 52-53. Ryu seems to go so far as to say that the Korean people are from steppe people, but findings in various areas from the Korean Paleolithic and Neolithic periods strongly suggest that there were groups of people even before the steppe people immigrated from the north.

<sup>19</sup> Ki-baik Lee, 36-39.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 46. Provisions of the criminal code included the following: murderers were subject to a death penalty; a murderer's family had to compensate the victim's family in grain; and thieves were enslaved to the owners of stolen property.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 4.

After Kochoson, three kingdoms were founded in Korea.<sup>22</sup> During this period, a central administrative authority was formed, the class system was structured, and patriarchal ideology became deeply rooted in the kingdoms. The emergence of a state brought forth father and son inheritance laws, even though there was some evidence of a matrilineal pattern.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, in Silla, matrilineal lineage as well as patrilineal inheritance still existed, and women had legal rights and a relatively high status as members of society.<sup>24</sup> Women paid taxes and had equal responsibility with men, until age sixty, to support the family. In the absence of men, women took full responsibility for the family. In Silla, due to the existence of brother-to-brother succession, women were not forced to divorce if they were unable to have a son. Even though arranged marriages were preferred to retain the woman's noble class status, men and women's relationships were rather free, and there was free choice of mates among the common people.<sup>25</sup> According to the Chinese records of Korea, men and women were seen together until late in the evening, singing and dancing.<sup>26</sup> Also, an unmarried daughter or son-in-law could be the head of a family. Jai Seok Choi argues that the patrilineal, father-son family system was institutionalized only after the Yi Dynasty.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Kokuryo (A.D. 53-146?) in the northern part of Korea, Paekche (A.D. 234-286) in the southwestern part, and Silla (A.D. 356-402) in the southeastern part were founded after Choson, but the exact dates are not clear.

<sup>23</sup> Myung Sook Han, "A Study of Confucian Principle of Women in Yi Dynasty" (Master's thesis, Ewha Women's University [Seoul], 1986), p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> Young-Chung Kim, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 36-40.

<sup>26</sup> The Chinese historian Chen Shou describes Korean folk life in his book San-kup chih, Wei-chih, Tung-I-chun written in A.D. 297. This record is believed to be the oldest document about the life of Korean people.

<sup>27</sup> Jai Seok Choi, Hankook Kajok Jaedosa Yunkoo [A Study on the History of Korean Family Structure] (Seoul: Iljisa, 1983), 359.

The study of family lineage in the Koryo dynasty reveals the equal status of women with some flexibility of women's freedom in society.<sup>28</sup> In Koryo, when a male head of household died, a woman succeeded as head of the family even though a son might be old enough to be the head. The age difference was more important than gender. A genealogical record would include the family of origin for both husband and wife. There was no discrimination in inheritance or in status among children. In family lineage, the grandchildren of a daughter and the grandchildren of a son were all recorded in the same way. Adoption of sons did not flourish in the Koryo dynasty since there was no discrimination between men and women. Inheritance was distributed equally, and the ancestor worship rite was held in turn by children, with no discrimination between the husband's family and the wife's family. When a family did not have any children to inherit, the slaves went back to their original master, either to the woman's family or the man's family.<sup>29</sup> Although polygamy existed in this period, especially in higher classes, monogamy was the prevalent form of marriage.<sup>30</sup>

The late establishment of strict patrilineal inheritance emerged from the need to establish the ruling power group through marriage.<sup>31</sup> To limit the expansion of the ruling class, remarriage for a ruling class widow was prohibited. The newly emerging elite group started to suppress Buddhism, which was the dominant religion in this period, while adopting Neo-Confucianism as a new ideology. This facilitated the patriarchal family structure including father-oldest son inheritance, private property, and forming the kinship

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<sup>28</sup> The Koryo dynasty (A.D. 918) was founded by Wangun after the unification of Silla.

<sup>29</sup> Kyung Ja Park, "The Women's Status in Koryo," Duksung Women's College Journal [Seoul] 5 (1983): 12. This article is based on Jai Suk Choi's study on family lineage in Koryo.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Oak La Cho, "Theoretical Approach to the Development of Patriarchy," Hankook Yo'sunghak [Seoul] 2 (1986): 22

village.<sup>32</sup> Through the ancestor ritual, which binds dead male ancestors to the male descendants, the patriarchal familial structure has existed with continuity from the time of the late Koryo Dynasty. Thus, gender discrimination was not institutionalized strictly until the Koryo Dynasty, and yet the roots of Confucianism began to grow in Korean soil for the political advantage of the late Koryo Dynasty.

### Yi Dynasty Period

The Yi Dynasty adopted Neo-Confucianism as a political ideology to give validity to the Kingdom which was established by military power.<sup>33</sup> The suppression of Buddhism was inevitable since the new government promoted land reform, and the Buddhist temples were the major owners of the land.<sup>34</sup> Another reason for the suppression of Buddhism, which was the national religion in the Koryo period, was Confucianism's value system which highly regarded life in this world. This value system was in line with the Korean's shamanistic world-view which also valued life in this world, contrary to Buddhism's negation of the worldly life. Nonetheless, the new Kingdom did not have absolute validity to claim its right from the people, since this Kingdom was established against the law of the universe by overthrowing the King by military power.

While the Kingdom was weak from the time of its foundation, the elite group grew large enough to control even the Dynasty. The elite increased familial patriarchy in order to establish a strong, family-centered political power group. The expansion of power by the

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<sup>32</sup> Chung Chul Yuh, "Community Structure and Class Structure," Korean Society and Culture (Seoul: Hankook Chungshin Moonwha Yunkooso, 1980), 97-151.

<sup>33</sup> The transformation of the social structure from the Koryo to the Yi Dynasty was a complicated process. While Confucianism had already taken hold from the late Koryo Dynasty, the social structure in the early Yi Dynasty was not completely changed from the Koryo. Early family lineage of the Yi Dynasty shows: (1) sons and daughters were written in birth order; (2) a daughter's children were written in detail as were a son's children; (3) there was no adoption of a son for continuation of the blood tie; and (4) remarriage was as possible for a woman as for a man. Inheritance of property was the same for both sons and daughters. Sometimes men lived in their wives' homes. See Hae-joang Cho, "The Transformation of Korean Patriarchy Family," Journal of Korean Women's Studies [Seoul] 2 (1986): 148.

<sup>34</sup> Young-Chung Kim, 80.

elite facilitated the expansion of the family-centered Neo-Confucian ethic, even among the common folks, because these people were governed by the elite. As a result, *hyo*, devotion to one's own parent rather than to the King, became the absolute value to be attained. Daily life was governed by strict Confucian norms.

Because of the high value on family in both Confucianism and the Korean shamanistic mind, Confucianism could be easily adopted and its norm enforced upon the Korean people. In the Korean shamanistic view, a child is considered an authentic being and the bearer of all pre-existing relationships and human experiences to be transmitted to the next generation.<sup>35</sup> Family is important as the endower of a child's life, as the child will participate in universal creation. Thus, in the Korean shamanistic mind, there is no discriminating value attached to a certain person. That does not mean there are no functional differences among family members, but means that there are no innate individual differences which might determine the value of an individual member of the family. However, the patriarchal ideology of Confucianism distorted this value of family members to enforce male power, valuing only men.<sup>36</sup>

Gradually, the importance of the family in the Korean shamanistic mind was strengthened with its own patriarchy and the Confucian value of father-son lineage. Family became sacred and procreation became the most important method of continuing one's family and the family's name. Besides the duty of bearing a son, special virtue, premarital chastity, and marital fidelity for females were demanded to secure family stability and the orderly continuance of the family.<sup>37</sup> The Confucian norm of filial piety described five

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<sup>35</sup> Hahm, 65.

<sup>36</sup> See Jae-Ho Cha, Bom-Mo Chung, and Sung-Jin Lee, eds., "Boy Preference Reflected in Korean Folklore," *Virtues in Conflict: Tradition and the Korean Woman Today*, ed. Sandra Mattioli (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, 1977), 113. This article shows the folk belief and treatment for bearing a boy. Recently, many young couples tend to have only one or two children which limits the preference for a boy, but the guilt and anxiety still exist very strongly among people when they do not have a son.

<sup>37</sup> The status of Korean women in the Yi Dynasty involved the following: (1) Only the paternal line relatives were regarded as relatives. (2) Social class and rights were transmitted only from fathers to sons. (3) The sole authority in the family rested with the father who held control over the children. (4)



orderly human relationships that exist between ruler and people, father and son, husband and wife, brothers, and friends.<sup>38</sup> All relationships were hierarchical, which set absolute boundaries and did not permit any transgression, except in the relationship between friends. There were absolute differences between husband and wife which resulted in the confinement of women within the house.<sup>39</sup> There were also differences in role and attitude, because gentleness (a woman's property) had to follow hardness (a man's property).<sup>40</sup> Women always had to follow men: first the father, second the husband, and third the son after the husband died. Men had wisdom to govern the people, specifically women.<sup>41</sup> This hierarchy legitimized the obedience of women and became a divine, absolute truth which was the rule of the universe. In Korea, Neo-Confucianism set strict rules for women's lives since it undergirded the patriarchy with its metaphysical theory.<sup>42</sup>

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Marriages were allowed only with those outside the blood clan. (5) First-born males held the right to lineal succession. See Young-Chung Kim, 89.

<sup>38</sup> Wing-Tsit Chan, The Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 267. See also Il Bong Park, ed. and trans, 小學 [Teaching for children] by Chu Hsi, New Orient Classics, 8 (Seoul: Yukmoonsa, 1989), 30. This book was edited by Chu Hsi in A.D. 1187 for the education of children, and consists of two parts. One part has four theme books which explicate the general principle of Confucian ethics. The other has two books which record various records of ancestors who properly behaved as explained in the first book. The main points of the book are the importance of education for children, and *hyo*, obedience to parents.

<sup>39</sup> Yung-Chung Kim, 85.

<sup>40</sup> Sang Ok Lee trans. and ed. 禮記 (Seoul: Myung Moon Dang, 1988), 53. This is one of the canons of Confucianism which describes the proper ritual. Proper ritual is not necessary only for God, but for people to achieve humanity. Thus, people need to be educated to learn proper attitudes and behaviors to attain the proper norm in the society. Ritual procedures and proper relationships are articulated in this book which defines the proper conduct for various human relationships.

<sup>41</sup> Il Bong Park, 71.

<sup>42</sup> Sung Won Kim, 解說四書五經 [An interpretation for four books and five canons of Confucianism] (Seoul: Myung Moon Dang, 1988), 317-22. Neo-Confucianism was introduced into Korea in the late Koryo Dynasty, in the period of King Choongryul. This school interpreted the universal principle of *I Ching* in a dualistic way: the phenomenal world and the abstract, invisible first causative principle of law. Because of its dualistic thought, *li*, the norm for absolute beauty and goodness, became the fundamental norm of the world and the society. Therefore, it undergirded the hierarchy of the society as the absolute ethical norm to be achieved.

Men had several wives, but gave the legal right only to the first; so the first wife had to endure the pain of receiving legitimacy.<sup>43</sup> For example, only the first wife's children were legitimate and could be registered in the family lineage. The first wife also had the highest symbolic status among the wives. Both the first wife and the concubines were victims of a patriarchal system which was designed to preserve pure, legitimate blood ties. On the other hand, women who deeply internalized the male social values tried to educate other women according to the social norm, forcing them to fit into the system. Thus, the victimization of women was perpetuated by women. Several books were written by women to teach Confucian manners and customs in the Korean language (*Hangul*) to lower class people.<sup>44</sup>

Devotion to parents was enforced by the same ideological system that demanded women's subjugation, and it involved complete obedience. *Hyo* (devotion to one's parent) became the dominant theme in the Korean people's ethical norm other than women's chastity. The relationship between parent and children was not a reciprocal relationship. Children had to do their *hyo* regardless of their parent's behavior. Women also supported the patriarchal ideology since they could benefit from the system when they became the

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As a result, Neo-Confucianism emphasized the absolute right of the husband, so that a woman had to obey her husband until death with utmost faith, sincerity, and sacrifice even though her husband was violent, ignorant, and abusive. It was the ethical norm to be obedient to the King even though the King was violent, abusive, and insane; and a husband became a King to a wife. One example of this hierarchical relationship between husband and wife is that a woman could be discarded if she committed one of the seven sins such as disobedience to parents-in-law, failure to bear a son, adultery, and jealousy, etc. See Il Bong Park, 71. There are many example of abusive cases in Korea as recorded in Kyu Tae Lee, Korean People's Han, (Seoul: Saejong, 1980), 110-11 including severe punishment for jealousy, hereditary disease, garrulousness, or larceny. Moreover, women's remarriage was also prohibited in order to tighten the chastity of women and keep pure, legitimate blood ties. Men could have many wives, but a woman could not remarry even though her husband was dead. Remarriage was considered to be the loss of one's chastity. It was against the *li*, a woman should not marry even though she was starving to death, because starvation was a small thing compared to loss of chastity.

<sup>43</sup> Young-Chung Kim, 96.

<sup>44</sup> See Yoon Woo Koo, "The Traditional Korean Women's Ethic" (Master's thesis, Koryo University [Seoul], 1981). This study focuses on the teaching of Naehun and Kyenyusuh. See also Sohae-wangwho, Naehun [Teaching for women] (Seoul: Asea Munwhasa, 1974); and Ki Whoon Hong, trans. and ed., Kyenyusuh [Displines for women] (Seoul: Hankook Chongsuh VII, Daejekak, 1978)

elders in a family.<sup>45</sup> After adding blood-tied members (sons) to her family, a woman later could gain a certain power over other women, daughters-in-law, in her family. *Hyo* gave mothers-in-law a higher status. Discrimination from the male could be overcome by having power over the next generation of women--daughters-in-law.<sup>46</sup> By having a son, a woman could actualize her life through her son. Her future could be guaranteed, at least partially, after all of the hardships. Even after the parent's death, children had to practice *hyo* through the ancestor rite. The belief in life after death in Confucian thought, and the Korean shamanistic view of life after death as continuation of the present life, drove both men and women to keep the ancestral rites with utmost sincerity. For men it meant continuing the family name while being revered as an ancestor spirit, and for women the ritual guaranteed that they would be respected as ancestor souls, at least after death.

Another method of controlling women was the reward system. When a woman sacrificed herself completely for her husband's family, the government rewarded the whole family. Sometimes women sacrificed themselves voluntarily because they had internalized society's values, but in many cases women were forced to sacrifice for the sake of the family name.<sup>47</sup> For example, a widow, however young, was sometimes killed by her own family members or by her husband's family members if there was any doubt about her chastity, even though in many cases the doubt itself was just a rumor. To have an immoral daughter or daughter-in-law brought extreme shame on the family name. There are many historical facts, myths, and stories about such incidents.<sup>48</sup> Also, if a daughter-in-law

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<sup>45</sup> Jai Seok Choi, 79.

<sup>46</sup> See Sung Jin Chang, "The Typology and Personality in *Sjip Sari* [Life in husband's home] Folk Songs," The Study on Women [Seoul] 13 (1984): 377. This study on folk songs about severely painful married life due to the husband's family, especially the mother-in-law, shows the victimization of mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

<sup>47</sup> Young-Chung Kim, 97.

<sup>48</sup> See Kyu Tae Lee, Korean People's Han, 133-36, and Kyu Tae Lee, Sex and Taboo of Korean People (Seoul: Kirinwon, 1985), 18-20.

performed an extreme sacrifice for her husband's parent, she was rewarded by the government. She was named *hyobu* (*hyo* + daughter-in-law) and sometimes was given some land as a gift for the family.

The family is the basic social unit in Korea and the principle of family extends to the society, which means the same rigid hierarchy applies in the social nexus of relationships.<sup>49</sup> This attitude brings about complete obedience to persons of higher status, while demanding complete obedience from those of lower status. People tend to accept authority, and militarism and authoritarianism has ensued from this fundamental, hierarchical family ideology without much resistance.

The harsh and brutal ethical code, involving a double sexual standard, not only forces women to live their lives full of *han*, but also perpetuates the vicious circle of conflictual relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, which has been the main cause of pain in married women's lives.<sup>50</sup> Violence has influenced on all women throughout their entire life cycle. By internalizing the social values, women can survive even the most miserable life situation, because actualizing the value of the society is the only way to survive while getting approval from the society. The cruel conditions of their existence, however, force Korean women to be full of *han*.

#### Patriarchy and the Korean Women's World

Philosophical ideology interacts with political and social systems while influencing each other. While society undergirds its patriarchal structure, the patriarchal, philosophical ideology also advances with a highly sophisticated rationality. Confucianism with its highly advanced philosophy, was introduced in Korea from China, and has provided the Korean people with a conceptual framework on which to build their society. It has

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<sup>49</sup> Jai Seok Choi, 219.

<sup>50</sup> See Helen Rose Tieszen, "Korean Proverbs about Women," *Virtues in Conflict*, ed. Sandra Mattioli, 49, which reveals the attitude of the society toward women. See Jai Seok Choi, 422, for the language structure which indicates the relatives of the husband and wife.

provided the ethical norm for Korean society and governed every dimension of the Korean people's lives, particularly Korean women's lives as the subservient group. Since ideology is an invisible principle of a society which weaves its structure, it is necessary to examine how Confucianism as an ideology has undergirded Korean patriarchy.

### Women in Confucian Philosophy

The advancement of Confucianism's philosophical concepts enforced patriarchy. The original concept of harmony, following the universal law, became a highly philosophical and separatistic concept which divided men and women as superior and inferior. The later development of Neo-Confucianism by Chu Hsi, which was adopted by the Yi Dynasty as an ideology for founding the country, again absolutized women's subjugation.

When Confucius (551-479 B.C.) established his philosophical school in China, patriarchy had already been established in the transition from a tribal to a feudal society as a result of the conquest of the Shang(1751-1111 B.C.) by the Chou in 1111 B.C. The Chou needed ideological support to justify their right to rule, so they developed the Mandate of Heaven which Confucius later developed fully at every level of human social activity.<sup>51</sup>

*Tao*, which existed long before Confucianism or Taoism as religion, speaks for the existence of a matrilineal state, the paradigmatic perfect society, where women might be highly regarded because of their life giving power as nature engenders life. *Tao* often is explained as female power which is frequently described with female body metaphors. For example, the first song of *Tao* in Lao Tzu's collection says,

The spirit of the valley never dies.  
It is called the subtle and profound female.  
The gate of the subtle and profound female  
Is the root of Heaven and Earth.  
It is continuous, and seems to be always existing.

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<sup>51</sup> Wing-Tsit Chan, 3.

Use it and you will never wear it out.<sup>52</sup>

The abyss of femininity is the origin of the world, immanent in the world. And human value does not come from governing nature or mastering others, but from following *Tao*. *Tao* is like water, forever flowing, but never unnatural. The images in *Tao te ching* are obviously related to women who create, nurture, and sustain life. The womb is described as a dark, empty vessel, bottomless and yet with no need to be filled.<sup>53</sup> It is the beginning and end of life, possessing endless creative power. Mother has an empty womb, but she has no need to be filled passively because the active power itself is participating in the cyclical creation of the universe.

I Ching (the Book of Change), which is rooted in the concept of the *yin* and *yang* polarity principle of *Tao*, is one of the basic Confucian classics and provides the main concept in Confucianism as well as Taoism.<sup>54</sup> I Ching's main world-view is correlation and unity between humans and the universe, as *Tao* is harmony with nature as well as change. The universe is in continuous change, forever interfusing and intermingling. Although it engenders *yin* and *yang*, this polarity is not oppositional in a dualistic sense, but complementary.<sup>55</sup>

Therefore, the polarity of *yin* and *yang* is different from the dualistic view of the West. It is not a permanent quality or state. It is in a constant process of change, and a certain state in a given moment shares only different quantities of *yin* and *yang*. There are no differences in qualities. The differences are "conditional and existential," not

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<sup>52</sup> *Tao-Te Ching*, No. 6, in The Source Book in Chinese Philosophy by Chan.

<sup>53</sup> *Tao-Te Ching*, No. 4, in The Source Book in Chinese Philosophy by Chan.

<sup>54</sup> *I Ching* can be traced to the Chou dynasty of Chinese history, but it is possible that it dates to an earlier time since there is some evidence of using *I Ching* oracle during the Yin Dynasty (12th century B.C.). Thus, this book was not created by just a few individuals or during a certain period of time. It was developed through centuries, starting with the ancient practice of divination. The main text is mystic and does not have concrete philosophical concepts, but later commentaries contain the metaphysical concepts of a well-ordered and dynamic universe.

<sup>55</sup> Chan, 262.

"essential."<sup>56</sup> The fundamental concept in I Ching is change itself and this primary principle applies in every stage of the process of change.<sup>57</sup> Thus, even stillness is change in its essence since it is one of the existential modes at certain moments in the continuum of change. Change is a creative power which is perceived as the flow of natural law. Therefore, to follow the law of the universe is to participate in the creative process of the whole universe by participating in change; this change itself is the changeless universal law. According to I Ching, a person then exists within the dynamic nexus of relationships which interrelate with all other dimensions of the universe. There cannot be any qualitative differences between female and male since the existence of female presupposes the existence of male, and vice versa.

Even though *yin* and *yang* are complementary in the early I Ching metaphysics, patriarchy undergirded its ideology of separatism by changing the world-view gradually to the patriarchal and hierarchical socio-political structure within I Ching philosophy.<sup>58</sup> Even though *Yin* and *yang* were categorized as femininity and masculinity as the complementary polarities of *Tao*, they were identified gradually with the image of man and woman in the patriarchal society. The symbolic image became the concrete one. *Yin*, the female force, symbolizes yielding, weakness, passivity, responsiveness, cold, north, stillness, and earthiness, which already had started to show some negative image of female. The property of *yin* eventually was identified as the lowly, inferior properties of women. *Yang*, the

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<sup>56</sup> Jung Young Lee, The Theology of Change (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979), 5.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>58</sup> Sherry B. Ortner argues that conceptions of gender are more fundamental categories of thought and experience, while Alison H. Black concludes that the correlation between gender conception and *I Ching* is not clear.

See Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" Woman, Culture and Society, eds. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1974). See also Alison H. Black, "Gender Cosmology in Chinese Correlative Thinking," Gender and Religion, eds. Caroline Walker Bynum, Stevan Harrell, and Paula Richman (Boston: Beacon, 1986).

male force, represents activity, creativity, warmth, south, and hardness, and was identified with men's properties which were superior and heavenly.<sup>59</sup> As *yang* leads *yin* and *yin* follows *yang*, man leads woman and woman follows man. Thus, man and woman are hierarchical according to universal law.<sup>60</sup>

Chu Hsi (A.D.1130-1200), a twelfth-century Neo-Confucian scholar, elaborated the metaphysics of the *yin* and *yang* theory which enforced women's subjugation to men as divine rule. He integrated and synthesized the various existing concepts of *yin* and *yang* which were developed until his time into one theory by integrating other concepts such as principle (*li* = 理) and material force (*ch'i* = 氣) into the concept of the Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate contains both potentiality and actuality which exists not only in the universe as a whole, but also in individual existence. According to Chu Hsi, the Great Ultimate consists of both *li* as principle and *ch'i* as actuality. *Li* is the principle force which is the essence of things: always good with no dichotomy of good and evil. *Ch'i* is the material force actualized in physicality: individual, physical, many, transitory, changeable, unequal in things, involving both good and evil, and an agent of creation.<sup>61</sup> Even though *li* and *ch'i* seem dualistic, *li* needs *ch'i* and *ch'i* needs *li*. There cannot be any separation.

However, Chu Hsi expanded his theory of *yin* and *yang* by adding the *li* and *ch'i* theory. According to his theory, *ch'i* has both tangible and intangible qualities. *Ch'i* acquires its physical tangible form through aggregation, but still has an intangible formless portion within itself.<sup>62</sup> This does not mean that *ch'i* has internal dividedness. It only refers to the movement of one *ch'i*. *Yin* becomes *yang*, when *ch'i* moves. *Yang* becomes *yin*

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<sup>59</sup> Jung Young Lee, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Myung Sook Han, 15.

<sup>61</sup> Chan, 590.

<sup>62</sup> Young Sik Kim, "Some Aspects of the Concept of *ch'i* in Chu Hsi," Philosophy East and West 34 (Jan. 1984): 26.



when *ch'i* is condensed through aggregation.<sup>63</sup> Thus, *yin* and *yang* are not polarities, but only different movements of *ch'i*, which is the underlying power in everything existing in the world, including life itself. *Ch'i* is the source of life; from its activity all different physical and nonphysical qualities emerge.<sup>64</sup> From this point, he advances his theory to explain different phenomena in creation by explaining that *ch'i* has a moral quality which is different in degree and not in kind. Differences in existences of the world depend on the moral quality of *ch'i*. There are different qualities of *ch'i* which exist between a person and an animal, or even between animals.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, innate differences of moral quality are present in every existence, and this interpretation allows for the universal law of order, a place for everything according to innate qualitative differences, which inevitably creates hierarchy and separatism.

Chu Hsi further elaborates his theory, placing *li* as the principle of all the movement of *ch'i*. *Li* and *ch'i* are intricately interdependent. *Li* is necessary for the movement of *ch'i*; but after the physical manifestation of *ch'i*, *li* is no longer able to control *ch'i*. *Ch'i* has its own autonomy, but without *li* it cannot exist. Only because *ch'i* exists does *li* have a place to settle; but *li* is considered the origin, existing prior to *ch'i*.<sup>66</sup> Even though Chu Hsi's theory seems to value *ch'i*, by placing *li* as the principle and origin of the all movement of *ch'i*, Neo-Confucianism is transformed from the early, nondualistic world-view to a hierarchical cosmology since every existence has different *ch'i* which is under the principle of *li*. *Li* and *ch'i* becomes different in the Great Ultimate.

This concept is extended to human society. *Li* now has both transcendence and immanence, which are manifested within the universe as well as in human beings as an

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 31.

original principle. *Li* becomes the Way human beings must follow. The value judgment is already attached, since *li* is the moral mind which is unmoved and perfectly good, while *ch'i* is mixed with human desires from material forces. Hence, *li* is the principle of the world, and *ch'i* is the concrete existence which already has different innate qualities. This view supports an absolute hierarchical structure in society. First, the principle of the universe, *li*, has to be obeyed by every existing creation according to its moral qualitative difference from *ch'i*, which concretizes the difference between male and female, human and animal, and human and nature.

Taegue Lee, a Neo-Confucius scholar of the Yi Dynasty, also adopted, internalized, and expanded Chu Hsi's *li* and *ch'i* theory. He argues that *li* and *ch'i* are interrelated but are quite different qualities, and that *li* is the only Great Ultimate, not only as the principle of all existence, but also the cause of the universe. He acknowledges that *ch'i* has the power to move, but this power is not innate power; it is only the result of interacting with *li*.<sup>67</sup> He emphasizes *li*'s transcendent character and superiority. Now *li* becomes the principle in every relationship and every existence.<sup>68</sup> This theory enforces the existing hierarchical patriarchy, since *li*, as a principle identified with male, absolutizes the husband and wife relationship. Consequently, the view of woman and wife in Confucianism is seen as the unchangeable, ultimate Way.

On the other hand, Yulgog Lee, another Neo-Confucian scholar, overcomes the dualistic view of Chu Hsi and Taegue Lee. He returns to the early nondualistic view of *yin* and *yang* as the fundamental principle of the universe, and he denies the transcendent character of *li*. *Li* leads the *ch'i*, but cannot exist without *ch'i*.<sup>69</sup> Both of them are penetrating and interdependent, and yet have individuality. Even though Yulgok

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<sup>67</sup> Myung Sook Han, 27.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 30.

overcomes the dualistic view, which at least opens the possibility of changing the view of women in philosophy, he is also deeply rooted in the traditional view of women, emphasizing the difference between men and women contrary to his own theory.<sup>70</sup>

Fundamentally, in both the Korean mind and Confucianism, the main view of the world is wholistic, interrelated and harmonious, and parts are accepted as essential to the whole. Even though tension exists between unity and diversity, this tension is not antagonistic or oppositional, but complementary. But the philosophical concept has been transformed from the wholistic view of the world into a separatistic, oppositional, and hierarchical in which patriarchy imposes its value. It results in sexism, classism, and separatism within the wholistic world-view which enforces subjugation of women.

### Korean Women's Reality and Han

In the Korean shamanistic world-view, no qualitative differences exist in creation. Human beings and nature are so deeply interrelated that it is unimaginable to think of nature and human beings separately. Without human beings, nature cannot be whole, and vice versa. Human beings were here before birth as a part of nature; they live now as a part of nature, and they will live forever even after death as a part of nature.

No dualistic, separatist view is offered of human beings, God, and nature, nor does shamanism offer a sense of discontinuity in time. Also, the metaphysical function of a human being is inseparable from the intuitive, experiential biological function of a body.<sup>71</sup> In the Korean shamanistic view, the most important factor in becoming fully human is participating in the creation of a new life by the union of a man and woman. Sex is the natural right of human beings, and "a man to be thoroughly male and a woman to be thoroughly female, in a biological sense, is to be in full agreement with the rhythm of

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>71</sup> See Sang Il Kim, "What is Hanism?" Hanism as Korean Mind, eds. Sang Il Kim and Young Chan Ro (Los Angeles: Eastern Academy of Human Sciences, 1984). See page 62 for a comparison of *I Ching* and the Korean's world-view with Whiteheadian philosophy.

nature. Both man and woman are equally indispensable and productive; neither is superior to the other."<sup>72</sup> Thus, in the Korean shamanistic world-view, there is no discrimination of gender as in the early fundamental Confucian thought.

Although Koreans still have an unconscious shamanistic world-view, Confucian ideology has influenced Korean life enormously. This results from the fact that Confucian ideology supported an existing patriarchal social structure by providing a philosophical concept. While Confucianism provided an ideology for politics and ethical morality in a systematic way, the shamanistic world-view was not systematized. Also some common perspectives of the world-view exist in both Korean and Confucian thought which enables the Korean mind to accept Confucian philosophy without much resistance.

One of the main sources of Korean women's *han* in present society still lies in the family structure which was shaped by Confucianism.<sup>73</sup> In spite of rapid change in the society, the fundamental family structure built on the patriarchal Confucian ideology cannot be changed easily. This lag phenomenon puts more stress between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law. The young generation of daughters-in-law is in immense agony caught between the new value system and the old one.<sup>74</sup> Through education, women begin to shape their perspectives of the world and life differently from that of the older generations, and want to live their lives according to their understandings. However, the deeply embedded value system of the older generation of parents and husbands, who feel a strong

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>73</sup> Kyung Ae Lee, "The Study on the Conflict between Mother-in-law and Daughter-in-law," (Master's thesis, Sookmyung Women's University [Seoul], 1981). This research shows the conflict even in present families.

<sup>74</sup> See You Kyung Yoon, "The Study on Korean In-laws Relational Change" (Master's thesis, Ewha Women's University [Seoul], 1985), for the value differences in different age groups. This study shows the value difference in different age groups. The older generation of sixty years and over follows the traditional Confucian ethic which emphasizes authority, collectivism, and consanguinity which comes from an agricultural, conservative society. The new generation's values are rationality, democracy, equality, and universality which results from their growing up with a background of an industrialized, mass society. Thus, the Korean value system has become a complex mixture which originates from the coexistence of traditional and the newly adopted, Western value systems within one space and time.

obligation toward their family and who benefit from the old system, strongly resist the changes women attempt to make. Mothers-in-law who are accustomed to the old value system cannot accept new values, but social changes force them into a new condition where they cannot exercise their power as they did in the old family system. They are at a loss, at the end of their lives, without having any systematic support from the society which is in flux. The issues of daughters-in-law have been named quite often, but the issues of mothers-in-law have not been identified yet. An old woman in her seventies suffers from the difference between her own traditional value system and the new one in a rapidly changing society. She shed tears while sharing her anxiety about her future.

Right now I mostly worry about my health. When I felt better, I used to help my son's family a lot. I did all the housework. But, I feel weaker everyday, and I can sense my being in his house is a little burden on them. The immigrant life is like being trapped in a cage. I cannot go anywhere, and I cannot do anything my own way. Also, I can see my daughter-in-law's uncomfortable feelings. I gave all my money for their business, and I cannot go to my daughter's home. I felt uncomfortable whenever my son-in-law's family came. It is like I have no right to be there. One good thing is that my son's family still needs my help. Now all I wish is my children's happiness. Yes, it is true that I sacrificed a lot, maybe my whole life, and also it was painful. But, I did my best.

She lived her entire life for her family members, and now she cannot find her place or lead her own life. Because of the tradition, she lives with her son's family. If she did not live with her son's family, it would make both of them uncomfortable.

Besides the conflict between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, the negative effect of the Yi Dynasty's Confucian family system such as the infidelity of men, the negative view on women's re-marriage, and the low status of a second wife still leaves its shadow on many Korean women. The double ethical standard demands women's virtue according to the old system, while allowing men to enjoy their privileges. Korean women who deeply repress their feelings cannot avoid transforming their *han* into psychosomatic illness in order to survive with sanity, as one of the interviewees in this study shows. Surprisingly, a seventy-year-old woman angrily shouts,

Once you know that your husband is not the right one, get a divorce right away. This is better for you. Otherwise, you will get a disease, and you will die. Don't think of other people. You are responsible for your own happiness. I was so mad with my husband when he kept going out with all kinds of women; I wish I would have had a soundproof gun to shoot him.

The interviewer was surprised with the intensity of her anger at her age. She has a difficult heart problem due to her *han*, she said. She continues with a deep sigh,

I worked like a cow. I had to take care of all the household. My mother-in-law was so fearful. I could not even breathe. Then, I worked for my children. Then, I even took care of my grandchildren. My stepson, exactly like my husband, left home to live with another young woman. His wife left home. I had to raise them[grandchildren]. Now, when I think about my life, there is nothing for me. I am a wind which does not leave any mark. I am a shadow.

Even after a woman becomes a widow, she has to live under old ethical norms which still strongly permeate Korean people. One fifty-year old woman cried during the entire interview.

I am a sinner. I committed a sin against my dead husband, and my son. I met a man who liked me very much, and I was so lonely after my husband's death . . . . My second son killed himself on a tree. I did not have enough time to pay attention to my son. I was so busy managing the restaurant, because we had to live. And I think my son was in shame because I liked him [the man] for a while . . . . I want to die right now.

A woman who has a wonderful family of her own still suffers from her mother's marriage to her father, whose wife was dead. Her mother was the second wife of her father. This interviewee has tremendous shame from the internalized traditional ethical critique of women. The society views a woman as dishonorable if she remarries or marries a man who was previously married.

One day I was deeply shocked by the story my friend told me. I felt painful dismay feeling it in my heart even this moment. She told me that my mother was the second wife and my oldest two brothers were not my real brothers. I felt betrayed and was ashamed. If they would have told me, I think I would not feel pain this much. My mother was not well educated, but was healthy and beautiful. I screamed at my mother, accusing her of marriage to a husband who already had two sons. After that incident, I never felt the same way toward my parents and two brothers. All those family secrets, doubtful air, was cleared for me. But, my mother raised my older brothers with all honesty and care.

Not only the family system, but also the society casts its male-biased, internal perspective on every sector of people's lives. Even though the society believes that men should be the breadwinners, the reality is that women often have to support their families. Their husbands are incapable of supporting the families because some of them are incompetent, sick, dead, or involved in addictive behaviors. Thus, the myth that men are heads of households because they earn the living is not true in many cases. However, in those cases, women are desperate not to hurt their husbands' pride, and also to emphasize the authority of the father to the children. When she goes out to earn money, a woman has to face the severe discrimination against women in the society, and at home she has to be doubly careful not to be seen as overpowering her husband.<sup>75</sup> One woman said,

My husband understood my job as a teacher. But, when he lost his job, he started to hit me because I behaved wrongly without any respect for him, according to him. Not tiredness, but the emotional strain from my husband made me really tired.

Generally women and children belong to a poor class in a patriarchal, hierarchical society. Furthermore, the Korean war left the Korean people poor. One of the deepest causes of *han* among many women is that they cannot afford to feed their children well and educate them as much as they want. They feel guilty in spite of their utmost effort and sacrifice. The love and devotion to children has been the ultimate value for Korean mothers, and it has been the source of strength to live. All of the interviewees expressed deep love and commitment to their children. One old woman who had taken care of four children and a sick husband, who had been ill and paralyzed for 25 years, expressed deep regret.

I think my son's short height was due to malnutrition when he grew up. There was not much to eat. But I fed them as much as I could. When there

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<sup>75</sup> See Hae Young Kim, "The Study on Oppositional Attitude Toward Housewives' Job Between Wife and Husband" (Master's thesis, Ewha Women's University [Seoul], 1986). The results of this study show that husbands who support a wife's suggestion to work set some presuppositions and conditions: the wives working has to be temporary; women have to keep their place as wife and mother and should not show any disrespect or any non-appropriate behavior for a housewife; wives should not have any job which will degrade their husband's face.

was not enough for everyone to eat, then I only drank water. This is my *han*. I wish I could have fed them well.

Her children now live well, but still she feels a sharp pain whenever she thinks about it.

The changes in family law in 1990 are very promising, but the questions still remain how the law will be practiced and how people will accept the new law. For example, women are now allowed to claim joint custody of their children after divorce, but it is questionable how the society will accept women who raise their children after divorce.

A middle-aged woman confessed,

I could not persist with divorce even though I was miserable. I knew that I could not have custody in our law. But, I reached the point that I could not go on like this. The thought that I might have to leave my children drove me crazy, and I felt deep regret toward my children.

Women's *han* creates a vicious cycle. A young mother expressed her love for her mother. In spite of her mother's abuse, this young woman can connect with her mother through her *han*, and her *han* rooted in anger and hatred is transformed into the motivating power to improve her condition.

She abused me all the time. She used bad words and physically abused me. I hated her so much, but I know she did that because of her frustration. That's why I cannot hate her now. My only wish is that I can provide her with all the comforts. I lived my mother's *han* from a very early age. But this experience has been the motivation for my life. It was the pulling power for me to live a better life. I did not want the same kind of lifestyle.

The family structure, the most important elemental unit of the society, was built upon the ideology of patriarchy which demanded absolute *hyo* from children and chastity from women. Many Korean women struggle to support their families in spite of hardships. And yet they are in double bondage--love for their children and a desire for their own lives. While internalizing the social values in order to survive, women have suffered from inner conflicts due to a double standard in every dimension of their lives. While creating deeper *han* in Korean women, the vicious circle of victimization among women continues.

It can be easily noticed that the patriarchal ideology inevitably makes Korean women inert, impassive, vengeful, indignant and full of *han*. Their right to exist as whole



human beings is usurped by being forced to entrust their lives to others. But, however painful their lives might be in a patriarchal society, Korean women sense the tenacious continuity of life, a sturdiness in weakness, a humbleness in being low. Out of this experience, women can hear and share others' pain in life while expanding their own horizons.

### Patriarchy and Power

A society which does not allow equality among its members cannot avoid destruction. Every existence is interconnected, and the destructive power in one will influence the whole society from its connectedness. A system which deprives its members' creative power will create a death-pursuing environment for the whole. Consequently, patriarchal Korean society becomes destructive demanding the sacrifices of the lower--women. This system entails destructive power in every sector of the society, and deepens Korean women's *han*. But the Korean women's *han* is not just that of Korean women's, but the pain of all members.

### Poverty and Hard Labor for Korean Women

Patriarchy inherently entails the political, sociological, and economic oppression of women. Not only does it control the political and sociological domain, but it also controls women's labor by limiting women to housework without pay. In most cases, when women hold jobs outside the home, they tend to do so-called women's work such as nursing, secretarial clerical work, or teaching. But, even in those areas of the work force, such as banking or corporations, more often working women are expected to leave the job or threatened with job termination after marriage or pregnancy, or must face being replaced by a man.<sup>76</sup> The hierarchical family system extends its structure into the labor market:

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<sup>76</sup> See Jung Ja Lee, "The Case Study on the Pressure upon Women after their Marriage" Yuh Sung [Women's Voice] [Seoul] 240 (April 1987): 42.

See Hae Jun Woo, "Have Women's Status in a Bank Improved?" Another Culture [Seoul] 2 (1986): 148.

men are in higher ranked work, women in lower; men are the main breadwinners for families, women are supporters of family life. Most women in agricultural society participated in various areas of production and work which demanded strenuous physical labor, except for a few higher class women. The change in the social structure from the agricultural to the modern industrial society created more oppression toward women. Women no longer participate in economic activities, and it also lessens women's power.

Because Korean history involved a succession of invasions from China and Japan, the living conditions were always harsh for most of the people except for a few of the higher class. As a result, women in most periods of history ended up taking care of the family and all of the household management without many resources, and had to do all of the field work as well. From weaving the cloth to producing the food, everything had to be done by women. So, one of the ideal images of the Korean woman became someone who was diligent, hard working, strong, and able to survive under any circumstances.

Hierarchy also resulted in familial individualism, since it facilitated splitting political power into numerous sects. It weakened the country while creating an opportunity for intervention by China and Japan at the end of the Yi Dynasty. After the colonization by Japan, Korea faced rapid changes in the socio-economic structure. Japan's extortion of the Korean economy pushed almost all Korean people into severe poverty.<sup>77</sup> Almost all of the good quality rice was exported to Japan which left Koreans starving, and almost all needed textile was imported expensively from Japan. Japanese economic exploitation deprived the farmers of land ownership, and increased the number of large, bureaucratic landowners, forcing Korean women into jobs as low paying textile laborers due to their loss of land. Women were employed as factory workers, laboring long shifts extending into the night, with bad environments and the lowest wages.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Sook Hee Oh, "Study on Korean Women's Movement" (Master's thesis, Ewha Women's University [Seoul] , 1987), p. 34.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 35, 41.

After Korea was colonized by Japan, Korea became the victim of a superpower struggle, resulting in the Korean War, which has caused a great amount of *han* continuing into the present time. During the war, families were killed, separated, starved, and victimized by both North and South. Because of this past, poverty has been the primary cause of *han*. While every member of the society suffered, women had to face much more severe pain from the situation. Korean women in this period not only suffered from loss of family members, which Korean women valued most, but also had to support families due to the loss of heads of families.

New technological modernization from the late 1960s has brought about unequal distribution of wealth which has resulted in a new group of working poor: factory workers, farmers, labors, and urban laborers. Women in particular suffer from low pay, discrimination in the work place and, very often, sexual abuse from male supervisors, employers, or other male workers. In an attempt to increase financial gain from exports, the society enforces the hierarchy and differentiation according to gender, and presents women as sexual objects and as cheap laborers while undergirding women's subjugation. Women's work still remains in certain "feminine" fields which are low income and service related, and in the business of selling sex.<sup>79</sup>

Women on farmlands, as well as urban workers, suffer from industrialization because young people leave the farms for urban factory jobs. With a shortage of labor, women in the farmlands have to do all the farm work without help from young people, while doing the same amount of work at home. Due to heavy work, pesticide poisoning, and increased community work designed by the bureaucracy, women become sick and are

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<sup>79</sup> Un Cho, "Patriarchy and Economy," Journal of Korean Women's Studies [Seoul] 2 (1986): 110-18.

without any medical help.<sup>80</sup> Thus, women still suffer from hard labor which is a result of a patriarchal ideology both at work and in the home.

Until recently, prevalent poverty forced children, particularly girls, to work like strong men from a very early age. Girls were more useful in helping the family. Because of their gender roles, they took over all the household chores including the child rearing of many younger siblings, born due to the absence of contraception at that time. They were also forced to work in the fields. Parents tried their best to educate sons who were their only hope to escape the poverty once the son obtained a good job. But girls did not deserve to be educated since they would marry anyway. Even today, more often young girls leave their homes to earn money to support their poor families or to educate male brothers, sacrificing themselves.

Poverty has followed like a shadow through women's lives, even after marriage. Quite often women have been forced to support the family, but the opportunity to make money for the family has been limited to physical labor or some small business. One of my interviewees, a young mother, shared her *han* of poverty.

I hated my parent's life. They were just like animals. Just to have something to eat, they had to work like animals. There was no meaning in their life. I hated it. I wanted to study so much to have a better life. But, my mother did not send me to the school. Instead, I worked all day long to do house chores, cooking and washing, to take care of my brothers and sisters, even when I was 7 years old. I also had to work in the fields. I decided to leave my home . . . . Whenever I tried to do something to have a better life after I left my home, there were always some men who blocked my way. They only wanted to ruin me, craving my body.

Another 70 year-old women angrily shared her *han*.

My parents were so poor. I worked hard with my mother while my father only spent his time at church praying or reading the Bible underneath a tree. My mother and I were the ones who did all the hard work from dawn to dusk. They arranged my marriage to an old man who seemed to have a little bit of money. They only wished that I could eat as much as I wanted. But I was scared. I was only 16. Then, I found out that he had personality problem, gambling and womanizing. His first wife had committed suicide.

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<sup>80</sup> Ju Sook Kim, "Is Rural Woman a Superwoman?" *Another Culture* [Seoul] 2 (May 1986): 160.

I was really, really scared. I tried to escape in vain . . . . After the war, I had a small restaurant and made quite a bit of money. But then he collected all the money and spent it on other women . . . . My husband gave me a disease. After 10 years of suffering, I finally had a hysterectomy . . . . I was so glad when he died in a bad condition in front of me. I felt so good. Because he was under my control after he had used me and treated me like dirt.

Poverty becomes more unbearable when society treats women cruelly with unreasonable excuses. The mother of a young daughter and son expressed her anger about the injustice of society. Actually she was suffering from the country's painful ideological conflicts.

We were a happy family until the war broke out. My father and mother were sincere Christians. My father, who was a technician, wanted and was ready to be a missionary preacher. But, then the war broke. The communists asked him to serve the community party. Because he knew that they knew he was a Christian, he had to do whatever they asked him to do, otherwise they would kill all of my family. They brought my father to the North at the end of the war. Because of the fact that my father served the communist party by force a month or so during the war time, our government put our name on a blacklist. One time, they put my mother and brother in prison after the 5.16 coup. It is one of my deepest *han*. We could not find any jobs even though my brother had graduated from a good university . . . . I became a beggar, after my husband's death since we could not pay the hospital fees. The hospital took everything we had. They even took our rent deposit money. I was out in the street with my two young children.

One middle-aged, beautiful woman shared her *han* which emerged from the male customers' view of her as a sexual object.

After my husband's sudden death, I was left all alone with my three kids. I had to survive. The only thing I could do was cooking, so I started a small restaurant. I worked day in and day out . . . . The most painful experience in managing the restaurant was the male customers' attitude. By having lunch, they acted like they owned me. It is not my hard work, but men's dirty attitudes of seeing me as a sexual object that is the most unbearable pain for me.

As we have heard, in spite of heavy oppression, women even under the stress of difficult economic situation worked hard to survive and most of them managed to survive; but the attitude of society and men were the cause of a deeper pain. They have been treated as second class citizens who provide labor and service only for the male class. Since the ideology of patriarchy is based on the destruction of life by pursuing the interests of a

certain group of people, it exploits not only women's lives, but also the lives of all creatures. The destructive power calls for further destruction, which inevitably sacrifices powerless life in the process. Wars, poverty, and discrimination are the result of the destructive system which perpetuates the deepening of Korean women's *han*.

### Power and Violence

Political power and a dualistic world-view are not familiar to the Korean shamanistic mind. To exercise power over others requires confrontation and antagonistic relationships, which Koreans fear since these will disrupt relationships and harmony. This attitude hinders people from building a political system. Rather than setting up such a system, Koreans value negotiation or reconciliation first before legal intervention. People fear the isolation which could result by revealing disagreement directly to others. Therefore, confrontation is an act which is thought to bring shame by attacking the integrity of oneself and others.<sup>81</sup> Inevitably their non-structured way of life could be gradually dominated by authority or the power class without systematic resistance, especially after the introduction of Confucianism. Thus, the power structure of patriarchy in Confucian thought overwhelmed the Korean people, while providing a framework for them to establish their own patriarchal society which inevitably brought about the oppression of women.

Patriarchy inherently rests in the inequality of power. Powerful is the one who seeks power from inner feelings of weakness. People seek to control out of feelings of helplessness and anxiety arising from the uncertainty of life. As a mortal being within the precariousness of nature, a human being seeks something to control in order to feel powerful. People not only want to exercise power over others directly, but also to control the symbolic power by endowing ultimate power to a religion, and institution. These allow

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<sup>81</sup> Hahm, 86.

people to have concrete feelings of security.<sup>82</sup> By giving absolute value to the social structure, which enables them to feel superior, men have illusions of having absolute power to control others while denying their weakness and disconnection from the creative process of life.

Susan Griffin describes well the process of man's split, inner psychological world.<sup>83</sup> One of the origins of patriarchy is rooted in man's fear of woman's power in creation and her connectedness with nature. Nature is full of awesome and fearful events which men cannot overcome or control. Women are related to nature, possessing earthiness, but men relate to themselves metaphysically, logically, and spiritually.<sup>84</sup> So men need to control women, not only physically but spiritually, while despising women's earthiness. Women's power of procreation and nurturing as Universal Creative Power becomes something to be despised. Through control, men feel powerful, but it is a pseudo-power which leaves them even emptier, and their feeling of disconnection from the world can never be satisfied by dominating women. In doing this they deny nature, a part of their true selves. Men separate themselves from nature, women, and other creatures while experiencing the compulsive need to control what is considered inferior to them. Actually, a person who is weaker and more inadequate tries to exercise more control.

Men and women believe this condition is inevitable, since men think they need to protect women, and women believe that they need protection from men. Behind this agenda, men have a hidden desire not to relinquish any power.<sup>85</sup> Thus, men have the

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<sup>82</sup> Lipman-Blumen, 7.

<sup>83</sup> Griffin, 14-29.

<sup>84</sup> See Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur (New York: Harper & Row, 1976). The author advocates that women's most valued role, required by society, is the bearing and nurturing of children. By the very fact that women fill this role, they are identified with nature and physicality, which allows men to be identified with intellect and transcendent qualities. See also Ortner, "Is Female to Male," 67.

<sup>85</sup> Lipman-Blumen, 7-8.

power to make decisions and to use resources, and they use these for their own interests, believing that it is for the interest of all.<sup>86</sup> Men exert their power upon women by force when they feel insecure or their powerlessness is revealed.<sup>87</sup> This power structure impinges upon every sector of society including the family. It causes family violence, sexual violence, discrimination at work, drinking problems which entail violence, child abuse, political oppression, and superpower conflicts.

One of the most typical forms of abuse is the violence by men against women--wife beating in marriage--which reveals a paradigmatic power dynamics between men and women. Cross-culturally, husbands' violent behavior toward their wives has been a common phenomenon. The studies done in North America on addictive relationships and abusive relationships between women and men show the process of a person becoming dysfunctional and addictive. This process is also parallel with the socialization of women in a patriarchal society. The abused in dysfunctional relationships seem to have similar characteristics with the women in a patriarchal society.

The similar characteristics are: first, abused persons in dysfunctional relationships and women in patriarchal society seem to have low self-esteem. Abused women, in particular, show more pronounced feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, fear, and inadequacy, and these feelings lead to experiences of shame and self-contempt. Second, abused persons and women in general show strong tendencies toward dependency. It has to be noted, though, the violent abuser is the most dependent person. It reveals that the abuser who exercises power is the one who feels weak inside. The quality of bonding in this dysfunctional relationship does not depend on mutual love, but upon need without respect. Third, abused persons and the women in patriarchal society tend to deny the existence of violence within their relationships due to numbness and unawareness of the

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>87</sup> Griffin, 144.



presence of violence. Fourth, usually men and women in abusive relationships have a more traditionalist view of family and sex roles than do other members of their society. Women in patriarchal society are forced to internalize the traditional stereotyped sex role. Fifth, abusers and abused in dysfunctional relationships are highly compulsive which may be a learned response to abuse, arising out of despair. Dysfunctional relationships create compulsive characters. Generally, women are considered to have more compulsive tendencies. If the claim has validity, the compulsive tendencies in women are the reactions to dysfunctional systems. Sixth, jealousy and social isolation are common to abusive relationships and also to women in patriarchy.<sup>88</sup> Women in patriarchal society are separated by being confined at home.

These descriptions are well articulated in describing women's psychology within patriarchy as well as that of addictive relationships. Women are socialized to be dependent on men; men are socialized to control women. This entails violent abusive behavior to demonstrate manliness. Violence between men and women is innate to patriarchy because of the power structure.

All the interviewees for this study confessed physical abuse, including several severe cases, in their marriage. Wife abuse is common in Korea, and is also accepted by a culture which has legitimized women's subjugation with its ethical norm. A common saying is that women and dry fish taste better when beaten harder, and women and children have to be spanked every three days. Whatever the husband's behavior might be, a wife has to be obedient to him. Kwang-iel Kim's study reveals the brutal physical abuse

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<sup>88</sup> Lewis Okun, Woman Abuse (Albany: New York University Press. 1986), 66-68.

inflicted on Korean women along with absurd accusations from their husbands.<sup>89</sup> Kim also reports that battered women internalize the accusations of their husbands (their own fault) while respecting their husbands, believing that they are actually nice people. Wives believe that physical symptoms they experience from battering are due to innate physical problems, and that husbands are the only persons on whom they can depend. Or they just accept the battering without ever thinking of divorce.

Lewis Okun describes the process of psychological dynamics in battered women by comparing it to the process of prisoners who are in a coercive, controlled environment. Many battered women are under confinement just as prisoners are isolated. As captive prisoners are forced to confess, battered women are forced to admit blame for their husbands' battering. As a result, a batterer has reason to batter his wife with less guilt, and a batterer can change his wife because his wife loses her ability to think. As do prisoners, battered women become numb, nonentities. They feel no desire to resist.<sup>90</sup> This process of non-being is parallel to the process of being a woman, and was especially true in the Yi Dynasty.

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<sup>89</sup> Kwang-il Kim, "Psychiatric Study of 50 Battered Wives," Mental Health Research [Seoul] 3 (1985), 235-56. Kwang-il Kim's study of 50 battered women shows that among 50 cases there were 14 bone fractures, 9 dislocations of joints, 4 eyeball injuries (perforation of eye ball-enucleation, exophthalmos), 12 stab or tear wounds, and 12 abortions due to injury. The reasons given for battering were the lack of understanding for the husband's extramarital affairs (36%), inappropriate behavior of the wife--according to her husband--(32%), and the remaining due to personality disorders. However, the main reason given by men for the abuse was that wives did not respect them as husbands. In half of the cases, husbands battered their wives after drinking, and 60% raped their wives after the battering. In rape situations, 6% of the cases were done while children could notice the incidents or see them. They battered their wives while children were watching in 80% of cases, 28% battered their wives in the nude in front of the children, and 67% battered children as well.

<sup>90</sup> Okun, 116-19.

Society defines roles and attitudes of people according to gender.<sup>91</sup> Both women and men strive to fit into the society's stereotyped role descriptions, whether they like it or not, in order to be accepted. Masculinity is defined as being strong, dominant, aggressive, logical, unemotional. Femininity is equal to being weak, passive, submissive, intuitive, emotional. To be accepted by the opposite sex, women try to be dependent on others by being passive and submissive. Women try to be attractive to fit men's view of women as sexual objects, rather than being persons who have the freedom to live by their own will. Men also need to communicate themselves to the world as being aggressive with no emotional intimacy, to be seen as manly and powerful even though they may hate themselves that way. Every human being feels existential anxiety, however strong the person seems to be, but men in most patriarchal societies are not allowed to feel or show any weaknesses, which builds up false pride.

The deprivation of physical affection in childhood, the repression of female sexuality, and the need to be manly make men angry and violent with women.<sup>92</sup> Anger and sexual arousal produce similar physiological changes in the body, so that aggression is closely related to sexuality.<sup>93</sup> Thus, men who are weak and have difficulty with intimate relationships have sex in an angry state. Sexual intercourse, accompanied by violence, more often satisfies their self-esteem. Rape and violence ensue from socialized gender stereotypes in a patriarchal society.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> A gender system is a socially constructed, symbolic system. In spite of the content differences according to different cultures, a gender system is bound with biological sex in almost all cultures. See Salvatore Cucchiari, "The Origins of Gender Hierarchy," Sexual Meaning, eds. Sherry B. Orthner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 32.

<sup>92</sup> Daniel Jan Sonkin and Lenore E. A. Walker, The Male Batterer (New York: Springer, 1985), 22.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 16. This dysfunctional system creates a vicious circle. Among male batterers, 21% were physically abused as children, 45% saw their mother being abused by their father, 50% either saw their mother being abused or were themselves abused, and 83% received physical punishment as a child.

This vicious violence is inevitable in a society where one has power over another. Alice Miller interprets the roots of violence and hidden cruelty "in the name of good child-rearing" in her book, The Drama of the Gifted Child.<sup>95</sup> When children are beaten or punished, they feel humiliation, pain, and anger. The repression of hurt feelings makes children stop feeling spontaneity in their lives, promotes mistrust of their own feelings, and leads to fear of knowing their true feelings. Cutting off one's feelings or doubting one's feelings leads to self-denial or self-renunciation. Not trauma, but repressed feeling is the cause of neurotic, repetitive drama in a person's life.

Obedience is the supreme principle in child rearing in Korea. By this pedagogy, a child becomes submissive and subordinate to power without questioning the injustice, especially when an authority figure holds power tightly. Alice Miller's hypothesis concerning the root of violence in child rearing is pertinent in Korean society where *hyo* has been the most important virtue. Parents should not be challenged, since they are always right. Fathers especially should be respected since they have absolute power to determine what is right or wrong. Children must be tamed as soon as possible, because only obedience makes children strong and patient. If children are taught to obey with a dutiful mind, they will love their parents. High self-esteem is harmful, and only low self-esteem makes children humble enough to respect their parents. It is not polite if children show their honest feelings, so children should express only gratitude. These authoritarian Confucian teachings about children perpetuates the continuity of the system in which both women and children are the subservient, bottom layer of the structure.

People who grow up in this society, have fragile egos and low self-esteem which can be satisfied only by dominating and abusing others. Even though Alice Miller's hypothesis has to be criticized from various perspectives, the education of children in Alice

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<sup>95</sup> See Alice Miller, The Drama of the Gifted Child (New York: Basic, 1981). Miller explicates the process of this vicious cycle of rearing which produces an unhappy, authoritarian person due to parents' unconscious desire to have power which they were deprived of in their own childhood.

Miller's theory is similar to that of traditional Korean society.<sup>96</sup> Both women and men suffer from the internalization of this norm by having low self-esteem, which inevitably provokes feelings of powerlessness and also demands that men have more power over women and children. For women, the above process is emphasized heavily as a child, and after marriage, women are under double pressure due to the need to be obedient to their husbands and husbands' families, especially the parents-in-law. Consequently, men try to control women and children overtly, and women try to control children by covert manipulation to meet their unmet desires.

Both physical and sexual violence are prevalent in past and present Korean society. Due to the double standard of sexuality, the culture itself has become a pornographic society without any shame. In traditional society, the family was the sacred unit in which the family name and blood should be continued. Father and son inheritance were already set from early Korean history. Marriage was arranged at a very early age by parents, for the family's benefit, in order to keep a good family lineage and power. Often the bride was much older than the bridegroom in order to increase labor power of the husband's family. Thus, the relationship between the couple was more like sister and brother, or mother and son. By the time the husband knew about the opposite sex, he had lost interest in his own wife. So generously, society legalized men's sexual liberty. Men were allowed to have many wives as long as they were financially able. The mentality of buying women, symbolizing the power of men, still exerts its power on the society.

Jealousy could be the reason for a man to discard his wife. A wife was not allowed to express any emotions against her husband's other women. By providing a double standard for the rights of wives, the first wife could claim the right to be the head among

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<sup>96</sup> Even though Alice Miller's theory is quite relevant to hierarchical Korean culture, her theory is based on an analysis of German society, and the relevancy of her theory for other cultures has to be critically studied. Also, her theory does not explain how much a child has to be disciplined. A child needs to learn limitations as well as nurturing, with acceptance. There is also a danger in her theory of blaming women for bad mothering.

the wives, and then because of it, she had to put up with the husband's several wives. Actually, all of these women were victims of patriarchy, and the system itself allowed for child molestation. Because of legalized polygamy, a man who was quite old could have a concubine much younger than his own granddaughter. Influenced by these historical patterns, present society values only young women (or rather young intact girls), who have sexual attraction and value as commodities.

The image of women is split in men's minds. The first wife is virtuous in every sense; she should not seek sexuality. Following is a folk story which reveals the traditional ethics against women's sexuality.

On the first night of the marriage, a bride was sitting quietly waiting for the bridegroom to lead, as was tradition. The bridegroom wanted to go to the bathroom, which was outside of the room. When he tried to go out, his cloth was caught by the door. He thought that the impatient bride had tried to hold him out of a desire to have sexual contact, against a woman's virtue. Angrily, he left the bride and never returned to her. After many years, when he happened to pass the house, he thought about the bride and stopped by. When he opened the door, he saw his torn cloth between the door wedge. Surprisingly, the bride was at the same place with the same gown. But, as soon as he saw her and realized his misunderstanding, she turned into ashes. Full of *han*, she could not move or even die completely before she cleared herself from *hanful* dishonor.<sup>97</sup>

As shown in this story, a woman should not have or at least should not express any sexuality. If a woman does, she is despised as an unethical person. Especially a wife, who has to be virtuous in every way, should not show any sexual desire. In a husband's mind, a wife should not have any sexuality as the virtue of the society teaches. Thus, a husband needs another woman to relate to sexually--the whore who can be despised and discarded after use like an object. This mental division permeates every sector of Korean society even in the present. Husbands are freely seeking sexuality with other women, but wives should be condemned if they do not maintain their fidelity. Men's promiscuity is

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<sup>97</sup> Nam Dong Suh, "A Theological Reflection on Manifestations of *Han*," *Minjung and HanKook Sinhak* [Korean theology] (Seoul: Korean Theology Research Institution, 1986), 324. This essay includes several *hanful* stories.

permitted generously by the society and society provides sex for men through a variety of services.<sup>98</sup>

Another dimension of the husband's view of his wife is that a husband considers his wife as a mother figure who will accept him unconditionally, who will devote her life entirely to the interests of family members, who will sacrifice her life, who will not feel any pain regardless of what men do, who has utmost patience, and who is not supposed to have any sexual desire. Men do not feel any guilt about indiscriminate sexual activity because the society assumes that it is natural for a man to meet his sexual needs. Also, wives are not permitted to criticize their husbands' sexual behavior, since they are expected to be like mothers who will accept them unconditionally. For these reasons, no guilt is connected with buying other women for sex.

This dysfunctional structure causes pain not only for women but also for men. The death rate of Korean men in their forties is the highest in the world. Their explanation for drinking and sexual activity is to have better relationships among members of the group to which they belong for better social connections or to ease their stress, but it results from the innate destructive nature of patriarchy. The industrial, bureaucratic structure forces men to be a part of the organization. This creates conflicts due to a need to control the system, when in reality they are just a part of the whole structure. The pressure of being a breadwinner, successful, and manly drives men to anxiety. To overcome the social pressure, men often turn to self-indulgent behavior. The exclusive, pleasure-seeking behavior of buying women gives them the false illusion that they have their own world,

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<sup>98</sup> Su Ip Jang, "The Buying of Sex in Korean Society, and Men's Ideology," *Another Culture* [Seoul] 4 (1988): 88. Korean society appears to be a sexually addicted one. Everywhere in the country--barber shops, saunas, bars, salons, and private house of prostitutions--sexual services are rendered to men. This study shows that men above 20 years old buy sexual services 1.1 times a month compared to 0.032 in Western society. Also, the sexual behavioral pattern for Korean men is quite different from that of Japan and Western society. According to this study, Korean men behave as teenagers who try sex out of curiosity, as if they are doing it behind their mother's back. This reveals again the mentality of a man who views his wife as a mother image unconsciously.

which gives psychological satisfaction and assures their superiority over women. It also relieves the need to exhibit superiority, and allows them to escape from intimacy with other human beings by indulging themselves with women who are bought objects. They try to forget the pressures caused by demands of the society and become numbed by alcohol. Thus, the Eros, the whole experience of human love with other human beings and nature, becomes pornographic sexuality.<sup>99</sup>

Sexuality, which once played the role of binding the community as one unified whole, becomes the tool for abusing other members of the community.<sup>100</sup> Now, destruction is done to both men and women.<sup>101</sup> Sexuality, as a creative power, becomes a behavior to be despised as are women. Men need to use it to despise and control women with violence. Women no longer exist in the mind as respectable human beings. Kidnapping women, as well as selling and buying sex, results from the same ideology. First, women belong to men, so society ignores any disputes between women and men as private. Even in the cases of severe violence against women, men have the right to do anything to their own property. Secondly, even though some violence is done to women by male strangers or kidnappers on the streets, people do not intervene, assuming it is a private matter between husband and wife or between lovers, to be resolved directly by the persons involved. Society is not aware of the root of this violence, ensuing from the dysfunctional system, which will affect every member of the society.

For the interviewees in this research, the predominant causes of Korean women's *han* were husbands' womanizing and the double sexual standard, accompanied by physical violence, and abuse in childhood. Every interviewee experienced a husband's infidelity,

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<sup>99</sup> Griffin, 254.

<sup>100</sup> See La Chapelle, 161.

<sup>101</sup> Hyo Sun Kim and Soon Hee Huh, "Korean Men - Run during the Day and Night," Another Culture [Seoul] 4 (1988): 100-12.



including the buying of sex. The sense of pain from a husband's betrayal was deeper than any other pain, since infidelity was experienced as a direct negation of the partner's integrity. All of the interviewees shared their hurt feelings, but at the same time, some accepted the fact as ordinary behavior for men.

A college educated middle-aged woman lamented deeply while sharing her pain. She looks graceful in spite of her long years of painful life.

I began dating my husband right after my graduation from college. On one date he raped me, and unfortunately I got pregnant. Well, I married him because of my pregnancy. My parents were really upset with the incident and with my future husband because he was so poor, but, he was smart. After working a few years in a store, he started his own business, and right after that he started to make good money, but, it was the beginning of trouble. He started to see other women up to the present time--for 20 years. During our whole married life, he was constantly seeing other women all the time. Sometimes, he had to give them good money to help them with a business. You see, sometimes they were virgins. You know how they felt when they lost their virginity. And you know how a man feels when he has a virgin, and out of satisfaction he generously gave them money to start a new life without any regret. My first son is retarded, and I believe that it is caused by the venereal disease which my husband transmitted to me. His desire was to have a son to inherit his fortune. But, we already have four daughters and one retarded son. I am not a baby factory. I could not stand any more humiliation. I asked for a divorce. I knew that I could not have child custody, but I arrived at the point that I did not care. But he did not want the divorce. He wanted to keep me as a first wife, and the other young girl, who is same age as our first daughter, as a concubine. But, obviously the other girl was not satisfied either. She ran away with another man. My husband was so disappointed that he lost her. Now, I end up raising a son from her. As he grows up, I cannot but compare him with my retarded son which gives me acute pain. I also can see all the problems with these children from their pain, but my husband is the only one who thinks there will be no trouble . . . The most disgusting thing is that my mother-in-law encouraged her son to do all kinds of womanizing.

A woman whose husband is dead said,

When I had a second baby, a woman visited my house. She was the mother of my husband's girlfriend. She didn't know he was married, so she was going to discuss marriage with his mother. I could not forgive him even though he is dead now. I went through all the pregnancy and childbirth while he was having an affair with a young woman. He used to sleep at her home, and I thought he was on a business trip. Come to think of it, I feel pity for that young woman.

A young, pretty shaman shared her life story,

I was kidnapped and raped by a young man in the village who became my husband finally . . . . He died from a motorcycle accident. I became penniless. My landlord asked me to be a prostitute so that I could pay the rent. But he raped me one day.

One woman who was quiet and shy shares her story,

I married my husband because I got pregnant during high school. I did not know anything about sex. When I got pregnant I ran away with the baby's father who had just gotten out of high school. My parents found out where we were and asked me to have an abortion. It was late in the pregnancy. The doctor told us that he had to kill the baby first by some poison. My parents tried to persuade me to do it because they knew how difficult it would be for me to have the baby in our society. But, I couldn't do that. So, I ran away again. I guess I had started my life journey already in the wrong direction. Right after we started to live together he started to hit me. Whenever he saw me when he was drunk, he started to hit me. Whenever I asked for a divorce, he hit me harder. When he made a little money, he started to see another woman. I think that is a man's nature. Because he hit me so often, even my children wanted me to leave. But, it is funny. After I ran away, I came back again. Both of my children have heart problems. During the night, they sometimes could not breathe sweating all over . . . . A Jesuit Father who gave me this job knows my situation. He gets upset in the morning to see me with all the bruises when I go to work, but in the afternoon, he comforts me saying, "There are so many abused Korean women. What can you do? All you can do is to have patience and love." . . . I told my husband once that I would like to be born again as him. Then, he said it would be a dreadful thing to think. I think he knows himself how terrible he is. That's why I do not want to be born again. I do not want any possibility of meeting my husband in the future even after death.

Not only does her own husband's infidelity cause her *han*, but her father's infidelity causes *han* in a small girl's heart. A woman in her 40s shares her pain and love for her mother.

My father became an orphan when he was four. He had to survive alone. Somehow he managed to go to a university in Japan during the Japanese colonization period. My mother, who was a school teacher, supported his education. But, he abused her physically and psychologically all the time. I still remember the sharp pain and fear, with heaviness in my heart, when I heard my mother crying in a small room. She never showed us any hate toward my father, but all of us knew the pain she was experiencing. My father always had other women. He was stingy with money. My mother had to beg to get some money for us. But, he spent money freely for other women. We were very, very rich as my father was the head of the national bank under the Japanese government. But, I remember seeing my mother's ragged underwear. She died from a heart attack. She seemed to know her death in advance. She always looked at me with a pain because I was the youngest. She must have known that she could not raise me. My father married just after my mother's death. It was one month later after my mother's funeral. I had to marry in hurry, because my father wanted to get

married as soon as possible. I was a kind of obstacle for his new marriage.  
 . . . He had three wives who died, and now he has a fourth wife.

As we have seen, patriarchal ideology fosters physical and sexual violence against women in addition to psychological pain. While projecting their shadow and denial upon women, men abuse women whom they view as lower than themselves. Physically or psychologically, men make demands on women's lives. The ideology, which forces women to be second class and makes men first class, traps men in an ironic double bind. They have to prove themselves as powerful, and they claim their power over women in spite of their own human vulnerability. Thus, violence is innately rooted in the social structure and the family system of a patriarchal society.

### Conclusion

Korea's archaic shamanistic world-view is non-dualistic, relational, and wholistic. But from the early period of her history, a patriarchal structure started to emerge and is settled deeply in Korea. Furthermore, the philosophical concept of Confucianism undergirded a patriarchal social structure. It provided a rigid ethical double standard for Korean women which has impinged on every aspect of Korean women's lives until the present time. In addition to the ethical bind, poverty, hard labor, violence, and powerlessness have become part of Korean women's lives, which entail deep *han* in their hearts. Particularly, men's infidelity is one of the main sources for Korean women's *han*. Violence is another cause for deep *han*, and it has become a rampant, destructive phenomenon in present Korean society. In this society, relationships between men and women become dysfunctional, which leads to destruction for both men and women, and the whole nexus of relationships in the society. On the other hand, women who have been oppressed so long believe that the social structure is not changeable, even though their reality in this world demands them to be non-beings.

The present system, which divides humankind into oppressors and oppressed, creates an addictive society, as Ann Schaef describes.<sup>102</sup> By controlling the powerless, the powerful believe they have almighty power. From their biased perspective, the powerful believe that the system they have created is innately superior and right for all members of the system, since they believe that their system is the only logical one and that they know and understand everything, including women's experience.<sup>103</sup> Fundamentally this system is closed to diversity and inhibits healthy growth of its members, which imperils the system itself at the end. For this closed system to be open requires a paradigm shift in relationships between the powerful and the powerless. There is a need to redefine the meaning and nature of power within relationships.

Exercising power is necessary not only for animals' survival in the world but also for human beings. The question is how this power is exercised because human beings are different in their ability to influence the world. The concept of power in patriarchal structure, however, has been that of controlling others or exercising power over others, rather than being harmonious or cooperative. The need for power to control others does not come only from external conditions which may seem to be threatening for a person's survival. It emerges from inner feelings of helplessness and powerlessness since a human being's existence in this world is precarious. Controlling others cannot get rid of all these feelings. Fundamentally, the intrinsic value in this power relationship of controlling others is self-interest, and power is understood as power over rather than power for. The relationship of power over alienates a person from others, which forces one's feelings to be rigid and reinforces a feeling of powerlessness. The powerlessness causes those who are

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<sup>102</sup> See Ann Wilson Schaef, When Society Becomes an Addict (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

<sup>103</sup> Ann Wilson Schaef, Women's Reality (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 8-11. Schaef describes the white, male system in the U.S. The main idea of her analysis seems to be relevant in understanding Korean society.

powerful to crave more power. True power, then, is derived by connecting with the power within oneself and others. Power for others is power for oneself since every human being is connected to each other. A human being cannot live in isolation.

People are relational beings influencing each other on their life journeys. If one rejects another's influence, one rejects life's creativity and is confined to a biased perception of life. One will be petrified instead of being enhanced.<sup>104</sup> When one opens oneself to accept others and does not fear change that promotes growth through reciprocal nurturing, the community will grow, building upon trust and connectedness. Acknowledging others' influence will lead people to be more humble, accepting, loving, nurturing, and respecting of each other. Not by overpowering, but by empowering others, can we create a new reality which allows members to grow and experience the joy of life.

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<sup>104</sup> Bernard Loomer, lecture presented at inauguration of the D.R. Sharpe Lectureship in Social Ethics, University of Chicago, 19 Oct. 1975. Reprinted in Process Studies 6, no. 1 (Spring 1976): 5-32.

## CHAPTER 5

### Theoretical Analysis of Korean Women's *Han* from a Psychological Perspective

A person shapes her or his personality as a result of various influences. As a biological and social being, an individual ages facing both biological changes and sociological role modifications. As a historical being, a person inherits the history of humankind and one's own culture. As a member of a system, an individual interacts within that system which includes the family and the community. In addition to differences in the formation of a person's psychological reality due to various factors, gender differences also exist between women and men in the shaping of their inner worlds.

From the study of Korean history and society in chapter 4, it is evident that a patriarchal social structure influences the psychological formation of Korean women. All of the interviewees in this study not only express their psychological pain, but also grieve over psychosomatic illnesses-- which they readily identify as caused by *han*--and their anxieties about themselves and their lives. The main complaints are: loss of self-identity; hatred of and disappointment with self; a sense of meaninglessness from not having a life of one's own; feelings of helplessness and despair; struggles with low self-esteem and feelings of inferiority; anger at the injustice of society perpetuated against women; shame of self; and lack of opportunities for self-realization.<sup>1</sup> In addition, many of them feel guilt and

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<sup>1</sup> Self-realization is preferred to self-actualization since self-actualization has connotations of hierarchy, as in Maslow's psychology. See basic needs (hierarchy), motivation, and self-actualization in A. H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper & Bros., 1954), 148-50.

ambivalence due to their desire to live for themselves--as if they have betrayed loved ones by wanting life patterns not endorsed by the society.

While social conditions limit how a woman can fulfill her potential, sometimes a limitation itself becomes a source of power, enabling a woman to increase her strength in certain areas. Although this cause and effect seems to be contradictory, the occurrence reveals that a human being needs and creates meaning in life in order to survive. Thus, the transformation of a woman's attitudes and values (in such areas as supporting family members or guiding children's education) becomes the only viable way of finding meaning for her life in society. The interviewees in this study share their efforts to fulfill their roles, in spite of limiting conditions, and none of them regret the efforts made to accomplish their goals. There is a sense of achievement, even though they are sacrificing their lives for others, yet these over-extended values have failed to make their lives fulfilled. While expressing the sense of fulfilling their duty, all of the interviewees express deep disappointment in their lives which have not been fulfilled as they wish.<sup>2</sup>

While sharing a strong desire to realize themselves with integrity and dignity, not many of the interviewees show any willingness to challenge the system even though many readily identify the societal root of their problems. Nevertheless, they comprehend the importance of love, connectedness, humbleness, and deep empathy for other suffering

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<sup>2</sup> Women in modern society no longer fill the various functions performed by women in traditional society, when both men and women were producers and consumers. In industrialized society, women have become economically dependent on their husbands. According to one study, women who perform a combination of various roles experience less stress, contrary to the previous understanding of stress in working women. See Grace Baruch, et al., *Lifeprint* (New York: Signet, 1983), 300-01. It is difficult to determine which way of life patterning is good for all women, but the deprivation of diverse functions for women, without a choice, leaves women with the lack of opportunities to find meaning in their lives. A life without choice itself becomes a source of stress for women.

human beings due to their experiences.<sup>3</sup> They also reveal a deep reverence for life, and feelings of being connected to the continuity of life.

The ethos of the culture, as well as the particular life context, influences the psychological dimensions of Korean women. Therefore, to understand the psychological world of Korean women, it is necessary to understand the Korean communal personality. The purpose is to see both positive and negative aspects of the Korean personality and to examine how these aspects enhance or limit the psychological development of Korean women.

There are differences in the process of women's psychological development compared to men primarily due to different cultural values, but there are also similarities in the process due to the same patriarchal social structure. Therefore, in this chapter the psychological formation of Korean women will be discussed in view of psychological theories developed in the West, with an awareness of the cultural differences. Then the concept of self will be analyzed to decipher those components relevant for Korean women which will enable them to have wholistic, fulfilling lives.

#### Korean Personality and Korean Women's Learned Self

Women in patriarchal society share some common characteristics. But each culture has its own authentic personality. The Korean people also have an authentic personality among its members, and members are under the influence of this group personality. Thus, the communal group personality of Korean people will be discussed to see the authentic nature of Korean personality, and how it has influenced Korean women's concept of self.

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<sup>3</sup> The marginal group has the moral values of "communitas" and an open system, compared to a structured normative system. See Victor Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (New York: Aldine, 1969), 110.



### Korean Communal Personality

For Korean people, the most important value is to exist without interfering with the natural order--an existence achieved by not insisting on one's own particularity. Unlike the values of individualism which enhance individuality and authenticity,<sup>4</sup> the value of the individual in the Korean world-view depends on how well a person adopts communal norms and functions to promote the homogeneity of society.

The value of relatedness and oneness has helped Korean people to remain a homogeneous group in spite of continuous cultural and physical invasions from other countries. When Korean people face a different culture, they exhibit an enormous capacity to adopt it into their own culture by transforming its values to their own, rather than rejecting the culture or fighting back. Relatedness and oneness also shape the Korean people's concept of time, which helps them to be one people with a deep connectedness. Their concept of history not only includes ancestors but also incorporates future generations as a continuum--sharing one history and its value--while absorbing and adding differences.<sup>5</sup>

However, the Korean group sense of 'we-ness' provides less rigid ego boundaries, so that identification and projection of one person on to another occurs easily. When a person's ego faces another, there is a ready identification with the other by taking on similarities or transforming differences through strong psychological power.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Robert N. Bellah et al., Habits of the Heart (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 77 for an analysis of American individualism.

<sup>5</sup> Hahm, 73.

<sup>6</sup> See Kyu Tae Lee, The Personality Structure of Korean People (Seoul: Sinwon, 1983), 85-129. This study illustrates many different customs which show the collective consciousness of Korean people. Homogeneity of Korean people manifests itself in various forms of daily behaviors. For example, fashions spread quickly and people order the same kind of food eaten by the other members of the group. Particularly in regard to food, the behavior seen in eating patterns exhibits assimilation and inclusiveness. People create a meal by mixing rice and soup together. One of the favorite dishes consists of mixing different kinds of vegetables in a bowl with rice. Or, people share one large plate of different kinds of food, including soup. Eating together, unlike in the West, means more than sharing food communally. It involves the same food

Individuality, differences, and particularities are the most feared attributes for Korean people as these will facilitate isolation and separation from the community. Individuality is only possible when one belongs to the group; without the group, even individuality cannot exist.

This relatedness and oneness also creates weakness in the Korean personality and promotes a tendency toward dependency and ambiguity. People are so vulnerable in separation that they create relationships on which to depend. They avoid conflict at any cost, which results in a lack of communication skills or an attempt to read another's mind. The skills necessary to reach a conclusion through open confrontation, and the process of discussion, are not well developed. To avoid hurting another person's feelings, one usually does not express clearly what is felt, so that any chance of rejection can be avoided.<sup>7</sup> Due to the lack of communication and the repression of feelings, sudden explosions are provoked in discussions which make persons very irrational.

A Korean child learns how to fit into the system from early infancy through close contact with family members.<sup>8</sup> Through good contact, the transmission of the history and value of the society is possible and parents' lives can be extended into the future, transcending human finitude. This intimate contact entails no sense of spatial boundary

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in the same plate, sharing equally. In addition, instead of "my" or "mine," people use "our" or "ours" even when referring to their own spouses.

<sup>7</sup> If one knows another only through the spoken language, the closeness of a relationship is doubtful. Both persons expect the other to understand thoughts and feelings without clear expressions. There are still many Koreans who will feel uncomfortable saying yes to an offering of food by the hostess of a house, even if they are hungry. Also, the hostess should know better than to ask direct questions if she cares about her guests. Thus, there is close contact among people, but no direct expression of emotion. If a husband constantly verbalizes his feeling of love to his wife, she will doubt the sincerity of his love.

<sup>8</sup> The Korean value of close relationships creates a skin culture among family members, especially between mother and children. Long, physical skin contact is necessary for children to feel safe while growing up. Through this dependency, a child can gain the individuality which provides an appropriate awareness of how to fit into the system, while not losing oneself completely.

between parents and children.<sup>9</sup> Parents and children share an ego by overlapping the zones of ego boundaries. There is no word for the identification or projection of a parent's ego to children, since they supposedly share a common ego.<sup>10</sup> Idealistically, the shared ego does not necessarily mean a symbiotic ego state; rather it overlaps and interlocks through interpenetrating without the complete loss of individual ego.<sup>11</sup>

Overlapping ego boundaries, which begin with close ties to one's family members, are expected to exist also with others when one is close enough to a person. Even though Korean people do not express their feelings openly in general, there is no separateness between two persons when the relationship is close enough to be like kin. Since this close physical and psychological contact evokes deep emotional ties which facilitate the bonds among family and community members, it is also a source of pain, *han*, when the tie breaks for any reason. So, any uneasiness in a relationship evokes painful emotions, since one feels as if she or he is abandoned or rejected, which is a direct negation of one's integrity.

The bond between family members emerges from the world-view of family as a root for realizing a person's life; this contributes to the value system which emphasizes *hyo* and the family. Self-realization is not for the individual, but for the family name. If one acts dishonorably, the family is shamed. While family provides a value in which a person can be rooted, the relatedness facilitates cohesion among community members. But

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<sup>9</sup> They share the same sleeping space, sometimes within the same bed, without any sexual connotation. There is a spatial boundary only between the house and the outside, not within the house. Doors in the traditional house are not made of hard material as in Western society, but are pasted with traditional papers which allow the permeation of the inner and outer. If parents are asked to knock before entering the children's room, it is an insult to the parents. See Kyu Tae Lee, The Personality Structure of Korean People, 193-203. This chapter provides various examples of these particular traits in the Korean personality.

<sup>10</sup> Hahm, 67.

<sup>11</sup> One example is that when a parent commits suicide, more often they kill not only themselves but also their children.

sometimes a family-centered culture encourages people to be selfish when matters do not connect with their own family interests, as with the Yi Dynasty.

The moderate nature of the Korean people makes them fear excessive happiness because they understand the flow of life to be like the waxing and waning of the moon. Nothing will last, neither happiness nor suffering.<sup>12</sup> So, even though one is very proud of oneself inside, one never shows it, saying only moderate things about oneself. But the virtue of moderation creates double spaces--an inner and outer self. As many psychological theories show, a human being as finite and limited, is vulnerable in the world which facilitates inner weakness and the tendency toward low self-esteem. And low self-esteem forces people to show their best to save face, to identify themselves with the powerful and higher status person, and to have high self-esteem. Therefore, people desperately attempt to identify with others on an external level, while suffering from low self-esteem resulting from their perception of self as "not good enough." This extends to relationships with other countries and results in extreme idealization of other cultures which seem to be better than their own. In addition, perfectionism and absolutism, which emerge from low self-esteem, can make people legalistic as manifested in Korean Confucianism and Christianity.

From the tendency of overlapping ego boundaries, close relatedness with family and community members, and the moderate nature of the Korean personality, Korean culture tends to form an orientation based on shame--compared to Western society which is shaped around guilt. Shame is easily felt when one does not behave according to family or community expectations, since a broken relationship raises doubts regarding integrity, not only in individuals but also in families and the community. Shame is a "longing for

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<sup>12</sup> Hahm, 80.

relationship, a grieving for what has been lost, a yearning for contact to be restored."<sup>13</sup> It emerges from close connectedness which facilitates a sensitivity toward others, and acute pain occurs when the connectedness is broken. Thus, shame has played a role in human society as a basis for a community's cohesiveness.

Shame also plays an important function in shaping one's personality. According to John Bradshaw, there are two kinds of shame: toxic and healthy.<sup>14</sup> More often shame becomes toxic, causing a person to feel low self-esteem. The negative function of shame lets people feel isolated and alienated, and sometimes creates a borderline personality, codependency, and addiction.<sup>15</sup> Augsburger also explicates shame while distinguishing between shame-based and guilt-based culture.

It] is a painful experience of the disintegration of one's world. It has the instant effect of disrupting one's social relations, disorienting one's whole world and one's place in it, and creating disgust with one's behavior and one's self. As an emotion, it is a feeling of humiliating exposure; as a situation, it is a position of loss of face, respect, and inclusion; as an internal fragmentation, it is being confronted with painful self-consciousness and condemned before or by the ego ideal, the internal image of the ideal self.<sup>16</sup>

Shame is a negation of oneself. And the world-view and value system of the Korean people, which emphasize connectedness and oneness, tend to create a lack of ego boundaries among people, a split inner and outer self, and low self-esteem due to modesty and shame. While the culture respects others, more often it perpetuates strong dependency and lack of self identity, particularly among Korean women who are forced to uphold the virtue of the society as the backbone of the hierarchical system. Korean women lose their

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<sup>13</sup> David W. Augsburger, Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 118.

<sup>14</sup> John Bradshaw, Healing the Shame (Deerfield Beach, Fla. : Health Communications, 1988), 7-8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 13-15.

<sup>16</sup> Augsburger, 116.

own self identities or the value of their own existences. Being alienated, even from themselves, they are absorbed in relatedness. But this relatedness is a pseudo state, since to relate intimately with others requires a clear understanding of oneself. Otherwise, a person only projects one's wish or shadow upon other people. Without a sense of self or an awareness of one's feelings, a person depends totally on the feelings of others which results in distrust of one's feelings and a distorted perception of the world. One of the reasons for not communicating well with others is not due simply to hiding one's feelings or to moderation, but also from not knowing one's own feelings or opinions.

Without real internal power, persons become desperate to control others in order to be valued and accepted. Thus, persons become willing to sacrifice their lives absolutely for acceptance or to keep a relationship, even if it is harmful. For example, women who desperately wanted to be accepted by society in the Yi Dynasty did unimaginably cruel torture to themselves, rather than change the reality by turning their energy outwardly. Those women did not believe reality could be challenged or transformed through people's commitment to a transforming process.

By concentrating on others, persons extend their own perception to the world, while creating illusory hope and reality. Persons struggle to reach an illusory world which cannot be attained and which only brings forth negative criticism of oneself and others, creating a feeling of helplessness. Therefore, clear awareness of self and connectedness with inner power will help people to transform their reality if it is contrary to their vision.

#### Korean Women's Learned Self

Korean personality has the weakness of overemphasizing the society's value of relatedness. For Korean women, this weakness is enforced by both society's value system

and the value women place on relatedness.<sup>17</sup> Over-valuing relatedness deprives women of the power to know themselves and contributes to repressed feelings, diffused boundaries, low self-esteem, dependency on others, sacrificing their needs for others, feelings of shame, deprivation of the right to communicate, ambiguity about themselves and the world, and lack of centeredness.

Then, the question is how a woman constructs the knowledge of self and world in a patriarchal society, since those two are closely connected. The primary question is whether there is a difference in children's ability to grasp the knowledge of the world and the self.

The genetic epistemologist Jean Piaget attempts to grasp how a child perceives her or his world cognitively in relation to time, space, causality, and quantity.<sup>18</sup> He views the process of learning as a dialectical process between knower and knowledge. A child has a mental structure or schema, and a structural change in the cognitive function actually changes the content of thought. In addition, the content of knowledge will change the knower. Thus, the cognitive system grows like an embryo from a simple to a more complicated, differentiated state to adapt to the world. But there are two principles in this theory: a continuous change in cognition system; and no change in functional principle, the equilibration law which regulates the process of cognition development. Piaget explicates the mechanisms of the developmental process as follows: organization--the ability to have a coherent view of the world as a whole; adaptation--the ability to reproduce the same behavior, to group various stimuli, to recognize different objects and differentiate them, to

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<sup>17</sup> See Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) for a discussion of the different value system between men and women in the West, which is also relevant for Korean women.

<sup>18</sup> See Jean Piaget and Barbel Inhelder, The Psychology of the Child, (New York: Basic, 1969) for a summary of the cognitive process according to Piaget. See also J.H. Flavell, The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget (Princeton: Nostrand, 1963); Hugh Rosen, Piagetian Dimension of Clinical Relevance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); and Herbert P. Ginsburg and Sylvia Oppen, Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1988).

organize various schemes into a larger organized scheme; and equilibrium--the continuous process of equilibrium and disequilibrium. The developmental process proceeds from the integration of physical maturation, experience with the physical environment, and social experience through various functions with the principle of equilibration.<sup>19</sup>

As a biologically based theorist, Piaget suggests the universality of the structure of the cognitive developmental process.<sup>20</sup> Even though he includes physical and sociological environmental factors in the dialectical cognitive development process, Piaget is ambiguous regarding how social factors influence children's cognitive development. And he does not show how emotions or gender impact the process of learning. Rather, in explaining the process of constructing morality, he interprets it from a male perspective without an awareness of gender differences in the learning process. He explicates that children learn morality through playing rule-bounded games. Further, Lawrence Kohlberg extends Piaget's theory in his universal moral development theory without considering the cultural and gender differences in value system in constructing moral development.<sup>21</sup>

The conclusion may be drawn that human beings go through similar patterns of cognitive developmental stages, regardless of sex or culture, due to innate creativity and the desire to grow as biological beings. Nonetheless, intellectual cognitive development cannot avoid influence from the external world. The experiences people have within the world will inevitably influence their perception of the world and self.

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<sup>19</sup> Piaget and Inhelder, 152-59.

<sup>20</sup> Patricia Miller summarizes Piaget's developmental theory as following: (1) A stage is a structured whole in a state of equilibrium; (2) Each stage derives from the previous stage, incorporates and transforms that stage, and prepares for the next stage; (3) The stages follow an invariant sequence; (4) Stages are universal; (5) Each stage includes a coming-into-being and a being. See Miller, Theories of Developmental Psychology (New York: Freeman, 1989), 42-43.

<sup>21</sup> See Lawrence Kohlberg, Essays on Moral Development, vol. 2 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).



Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule present their study of women's learning process in their book Women's Ways of Knowing. Their study reveals the correlation between social structure and the process of cognitive development. But the findings of the research suggest that the process of cognitive development of women is the process of the oppressed. The research is more relevant for Korean society since the Korean society emphasizes relationship as women in general tend to value it, and the society is very oppressive due to its hierarchical and patriarchal structure. Furthermore, Korean society in general highly regards a person who is not very expressive, but is rather calm and prudent. One of the highest virtues for women is not to express any emotion or opinion. Thus, the social structure which forces women to be subordinate and the virtue of the society which demands women to be silent, shape the process of women's cognitive development.

When a woman is forced to be silent, there is no communication with the outside world or even with oneself, which also prevents intellectual growth. Further, silence blocks a woman from hearing her inner voice, and the lack of power to know her inner wisdom or knowledge forces her to turn to outer authority. She becomes totally dependent on authority. If she hears her inner voice, she feels guilty toward persons in authority, as though she is depriving them of their power. In this first stage of silence, women view the world in polarity, and believe that they have to support the system in spite of their defeat. Women are extremely tuned in to others' needs and they feel guilty if they think they are taking care of themselves, which inevitably makes them selfless.<sup>22</sup> Through this process, women not only lose their voices but also the power to claim their own beings. The awareness of the inner self is obliterated and replaced by emptiness, while there is a desperate attempt to achieve wholeness out of the fragments. Without knowing their deep

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 33-71.

rage, which is caused by losing their selves, women project their own anger of losing themselves onto other women.<sup>23</sup>

Belenky's study argues that only when women pay attention to their inner voice can they start to gain the ability to trust their inner selves and become connected to their own intuitive knowledge. This knowledge will help them to gain their own strength toward wholeness.<sup>24</sup> Women acquire knowledge through their own inner power, and add to the power by sharing and connecting with others. Therefore, knowledge can grow out of their very embeddedness in human relationships and their alertness to the details of everyday life.<sup>25</sup> Only when women become aware of their own selves can they nurture others with intimacy, since they will feel genuine connectedness with others from being connected with themselves.

The process of knowing for women is actually the process of searching the inner-self, claiming inner power, and gaining original authority. It is the process of liberation from the oppressive system, and parallels the pedagogy of Paulo Freire's the liberation of the oppressed.<sup>26</sup> The hierarchical social structure, and the ethics and virtues of the patriarchal society, force women to lose themselves by being confined in their limited spaces in the society and being preoccupied with triviality. The learning process itself becomes the addictive process, and yet women are accused of the traits shaped by the system as if those traits are innate for women.

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<sup>23</sup> Griffin, 201-07.

<sup>24</sup> Belenky et al., 58. In Belenky's research, the subjective woman does not acquire her inner knowledge from public schooling or social learning and, in many cases, those subjective women did not have a male authority figure at home. It can be assumed that the less a woman experiences male authority, the more she becomes a subjective knower. This subjective knowledge, however, may be a hindrance if she works in the public domain which demands silent women who will obey authority.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 76-86.

<sup>26</sup> Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Continuum, 1986)

Most of the interviewees in this study seem to be in the stage of silence described by Belenky et al. and a few seem to be on the verge of subjectivism, though no scales of measurement were used to analyze the interview data on these measures. Most of them entered their current marriages just after school or after working at home. Their lives have been in the domestic domain, without any role in the public world except in the case of the sudden death of a husband. Because they have been taught at home and school to be silent knowers, they are not even aware of any other way of knowing before or after marriage. Even though most of them may not have the awareness of their own ability to know themselves, often these women started to acknowledge their inner voices (as well as their intuitive knowledge) in daily practical matters. When they hear their inner voices and feel right about themselves, they gain the strength to direct their own lives. Still, however, they are fearful of telling their husbands for fear of hurting their pride. They hesitate to advise their husband even in practical matters.

A woman shares her frustration with married life in regards to decision making in practical matters, fearing that her suggestions might challenge her husband's authority.

I knew how my plan would work. But, I had a hard time sharing with my husband, wondering how he would take it. After all, all the business we succeeded in was due to my plans, my insight, and my labor.

Another middle-aged woman who is struggling to find the meaning of self and world shares her inner confusion, and yet expresses a determination to grow.

Now, I am hearing my inner voice. I don't know where my life is going right now except I am turning to hear my inner voice to find my life. But one thing definite is that I cannot turn around to be the old me. I cannot go back. I will search for the meaning of life and myself.

In addition to the lack of inner strength, shame is also a prevalent feeling among Korean women. Shame is felt due to the cultural ethos which provokes it in people, and from being women. Shame is a healthy human emotion, necessary for a human being in a society. However, shame can be easily turned into a feeling of being flawed. When one is not accepted as oneself, one internalizes negative, shameful feelings. A person's shame

turns into an identity which forces one to feel inferior and creates a false self. Consequently, the true self ceases to exist psychologically. Thus, a woman becomes other than herself, feeling annihilated when she is not accepted as herself. Also, family-centered communalism tends to require conformity from its members while the communal family plays the superego role. If one does not conform to one's society, shame occurs. Shame is a more fundamental negation of self than guilt. Thus, shame and negation of self are inseparable in women's consciousness. As Valerie Saving Goldstein argues, the problem with women, contrary to the concept of traditional sin, is not too much self consciousness but rather triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness, which result in the negation of self because of a lack of organizing power for their lives.<sup>27</sup> Many women express shame at being female and experience feelings of non-being without any reason. Some of the interviewees expressed their feelings of shame without any hesitations.

I am shameful because I am woman. I don't know why, but somehow I feel inadequate.

I am shameful because my husband abuses me in front of my children.

I am shameful because my husband does not respect me as a decent human being. Now I believe that I am as my husband critically defines me.

Hence, Korean women are not only forced to give the authority to men and society, but their very existence is denied. One woman in her fifties, who works in an organization, told her story. She seems to have nice parents, and is happy to have a hard-working husband. Also, she is satisfied with her present situation as a cleaning woman. She appears to be fully content with her life. But when the researcher of this study asked her what she would like to be if she were to be born again, her answer was simple and clear.

I want to be born as a man.

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<sup>27</sup> See Valerie Saving Goldstein, "The Human Situation: A Feminist View," Journal of Religion 40 (April 1960): 100-12.

These voices tell us how deeply women suffer from: lack of self-value; being denied respect as decent human beings; having their existence denied; being trivialized by their husbands; suffering from humiliation, self-doubt, feelings of inadequacy and shame; and their negation from being women. Most of them have no knowledge about the root of these feelings. They mostly believe that these feelings emerge from being inferior in every dimension. Women are forced to be silent, confused and mistrustful of their inner strength and voice. But the pseudo-weakness cannot be true forever. A woman starts her journey when she notices genuine power within herself. An example of this is seen in Martha, in Diving Deep and Surfacing, when she realizes that true knowledge only comes through her own inner core which is the constant capacity for insight into her life as Watcher.<sup>28</sup> The journey to knowledge and self starts when a woman trusts her inner voice as in Belenky's description of this stage as subjective knowledge. Even though the interviewees in this dissertation study seemed to be helpless and powerless, the researcher sensed their inner power and the strong desire to live their lives fully. Their dreams were already in their souls, and ready to bloom if they knew how. Their struggles will not be ended soon, but those struggles will continue to create a new reality by actively constructing a new knowledge with a deep empathy for the life experiences of other human beings.

As previously discussed, the process of cognitive development is the integration of physical maturation, physical environment, and social environment as in Piaget's theory. External environmental factors do influence the process and the content for a person's knowledge about oneself and the world, even though the faculty to learn about the world is similar for all, due to the human biological structure.

Women in a patriarchal, hierarchical system cannot avoid shaping their concept of the self and attitude toward the world in a negative way because of the input society

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<sup>28</sup> Carol Christ, Diving Deep and Surfacing, 69.

provides for them. A society which limits people in a certain way blocks the creativity of the people, which will eventually limit the growth of the whole society. When a system is open for diversity and multiplicity without demanding universality, growth will flourish from the richness and abundance which emerges from each member's creativity and from being connected to the creativity of the universe. Humility in oneself leads to the acceptance of others, which also will lead to the ultimate acceptance of all in one harmonious universe without rejecting others because of differences. Within the harmony, all the differences and conflicts will not be asked to disappear, but will be respected as creative forces while influencing the richness of life.

### The Psychological Process of Becoming Korean Women

Constructing the self is not a simple process. Besides the cognitive dimension, there are also other psychological factors which influence the process. To understand Korean women's psychological formation, a discussion of Freud's psychoanalytic theory is unavoidable, since a great deal of psychological, theoretical development presupposes Freud's theory as a starting point, even though it entails criticism from both a cultural and a feminist perspective.

Freud builds his psychosexual developmental stage theory from the hypothesis that a girl has a fantasy to have her father, which leads to an Electra complex and penis envy. His hypothetical theory starts from analyzing women's hysteria. Even though his experiences with female patients reveal that the hysteric symptoms tend to appear more often in married women, Freud, without paying enough attention to the social condition of married women, assumes that the root of hysteria must begin earlier before marriage. Further, when he notices that there are strong connections between women patients' hysteria and sexual trauma in their childhood, he concludes that the patients' memories of

their fathers' seductions are fantasies, rather than actual incidents.<sup>29</sup> Not only does he ignore the possibility of sexual abuse of daughters by fathers, he interprets the data and builds his theory from a male perspective which views a woman as someone who is lacking something compared to a man and who is constantly longing for compensation.

The discovery that she is castrated is a turning point in a girl's growth. Three possible lines of development diverge from it: one leads to sexual inhibition and to neurosis, the second to a modification of character in the sense of masculinity complex, and the third to normal femininity.<sup>30</sup>

Women have the hope of someday obtaining a penis in spite of everything . . . I cannot escape the notion (though I hesitate to give it expression) that for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in men . . . . We must not allow ourselves to be deflected from such conclusion by the denials of the feminists, who are anxious to force us to regard the two sexes as equal in position and worth.<sup>31</sup>

Out of helplessness from the unresolved Electra complex toward her father, a woman finally settles her complex by identifying with her mother, while passively longing for her father's love which can be fulfilled when she has her own baby.<sup>32</sup> Freud further discusses that a woman may have difficulty achieving sexual maturity due to a more repressed, weaker sexuality in a girl than a boy. A girl cannot avoid the fate of an

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<sup>29</sup> See Sigmund Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis, vol. 16 of Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, (London: Hogart Press, 1953-66) for this discussion.

<sup>30</sup> Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis, vol. 22 of SE, 126.

<sup>31</sup> Freud, Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinctions Between the Sexes, vol. 19 of SE, 258.

<sup>32</sup> Freud's Oedipus complex theory is his own interpretation of the myth. The myth of a son killing his father for the mother's love has to be understood in the context of early culture centered on female fertility. The female Goddess represents the creative power, but the male God has to be regenerated yearly, which is symbolized by a son (a new king) killing his father (an old king) for the power of rebirth. Thus, Oedipus has to be reinterpreted as male jealousy between men for power which they do not own naturally, but seek desperately. See Barbara G. Walker, The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 430. The result is male political domination over females in order to own female creative power. Therefore, in early society males had special rituals to imitate women's power, and castration was one of those rituals which symbolically endowed men with female power. Thus, penis envy and castration fear have to be reinterpreted in their own cultural context and from a non-biased perspective. See *ibid.*, 142.

inferiority or masculine complex by always wishing for a penis which she does not have.<sup>33</sup> Due to biological differences, a girl will incur narcissistic damage without ever developing a boy's super ego, which will disqualify her from being a member of a society in the same sense as a man.<sup>34</sup>

Freud's theory on women's psychology cannot be fully discussed here, but it is clear that his theory cannot avoid criticism. First, his interpretations of clinical observations are heavily male-biased, viewing man as the standard. Secondly, his theory is a closed, biological one which is not open to culture's influence or cultural differences (even though a later theory tries to be more open).<sup>35</sup> His theory of women's development has influenced psychological professionals tremendously, but there were a few contenders among his followers. Alfred Adler's theory shifts from Freud's focus on sexual energy as psychological power to social interpersonal relationships, emphasizing society's influence on women's personality. He argues that inferiority is the fundamental feeling of all humans which has to be overcome through human connectedness and cooperation. If one cannot grow within relationships for social interest, one becomes pathological and tries to dominate others to feel superior. Inequality between the sexes demeans women's power to grow and to pursue their goals in life.<sup>36</sup> The inequality creates pathological superiority in men and inferiority in women. This social condition propels women to pursue moral superiority to compensate for inferiority.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Freud, The Sexual Theories of Children(1908), vol. 9 of S.E., 218.

<sup>34</sup> See Freud, The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex(1924), 178, and New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, 134.

<sup>35</sup> See Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism (New York: Vintage, 1975) for neo-Freudian arguments on Freud's theory on women's psychology.

<sup>36</sup> Alfred Adler, Understanding Human Nature (New York: Greenburg, 1927), 123.

<sup>37</sup> Hertha Orgler, Alfred Adler: The Man and His Work (Ashington, England: C.W. Daniel, 1947), 90-95



Another of the followers who became discontented with Freud was Karen Horney. She understands psychological dynamics as a dialectic between society and the individual instead of accepting Freud's biological, mechanistic view of human beings. Her hypothesis presupposes that basic anxiety develops if the environment does not provide safety for a child.

Basic anxiety is that the environment is dreaded as a whole because it is felt to be unreliable, mendacious, unappreciative, unfair, unjust, begrudging and merciless. . . . He feels in danger of his individuality being obliterated, his freedom taken away, his happiness prevented. In contrast to the fear of castration this fear is not fantasy, but is well founded on reality. In an environment in which the basic anxiety develops, the child's free use of energies is thwarted, his self-esteem and self-reliance are undermined, fear is instilled by intimidation and isolation, his expansiveness is warped through brutality, standards or overprotective "love." The other essential element in the basic anxiety is that a child is rendered helpless to defend himself adequately against infringements. Not only is he biologically helpless and dependent on the family, but every kind of self-assertion is discouraged.<sup>38</sup> To be a real self, which is "a central inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique in each," a person needs an environment which provides the safety not to create an idealized self--a false self.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, Horney emphasizes the environmental influence on the psychological process.

She further confronts Freud's theory of women's psychology--such as women's tendency toward masochism, women's frigidity, denial of the vagina, and castration fears--from her clinical experiences.<sup>40</sup> First of all, she denies Freud's penis envy theory arguing that it is only a hypothesis--and not a useful hypothesis. Penis envy is the mutual envy and attraction of the sexes for each other, and men also show envy for women's pregnancy. Castration fantasy is present in boys and girls as a process to master the Oedipus complex. Women's sexuality is not tied only with reproduction; spontaneous vaginal sensations are present in little girls and vaginal masturbation is common. Frigidity in women is not an

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<sup>38</sup> Karen Horney, New Ways in Psychoanalysis (New York: Norton, 1939), 75-76.

<sup>39</sup> Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth (New York: Norton, 1950), 17.

<sup>40</sup> See Karen Horney, Feminine Psychology (New York: Norton, 1967), 55-70.

illness, but is the result of male-oriented culture which is not favorable to the unfolding of women, and their individuality. Further, women's masochism is the effect of cultural conditioning as a learned behavior; and men's nature for polygamy is the exercise of male power in a culture which is permissive regarding males.

Besides Horney's study, there are also many studies which have been done on man's fear of woman's procreative power, and these include the fields of religion, anthropology, and ethnography.<sup>41</sup> Susan Griffin's analysis of Western culture reveals the psychological process of a society which is deeply rooted in men's fear of women's powers of sexuality and creation.<sup>42</sup> Ethnographer Margaret Mead's study on the relationship of culture and its members' personalities also shows the direct connection between sex and society-constructed gender roles which inevitably shape the individual's personality. She concludes that all cultures ascribe roles based on sexuality, and cultures select a normative personality based on sexual differences, which shapes the personalities of members. Because of the defined normality, one forces oneself to adapt to avoid becoming a deviant from the group. If a person exhibits certain characteristics belonging to another group, then the rest of the members of the group to which a person belongs feel threatened.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, Freud's psychological theory of women is a hypothesis of woman in patriarchy from western man's experience, which ignores any societal influence on a person's psychological reality. The process of constructing the psychological self is not

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<sup>41</sup> For one example in the field of anthropological sociology, see Margaret Mead, Male and Female (New York: Morrow, 1949), as cited in Karen Horney, Feminine Psychology, 21. According to Mead's study, there are some rituals in preliterate groups where men take over women's female functions symbolically, which Horney argues is male envy for women's reproductive power.

<sup>42</sup> Griffin, 50.

<sup>43</sup> Margaret Mead, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (New York: New American Library, 1952).

free from external influence, and the process will be different according to gender and culture. Therefore, a person's psychological reality, both cognitive and emotional, is not an innate one but a product of dialectical interaction between self and society. And this process starts from the very beginning of one's life.

Object-relations theory clearly explicates the process of psychological formation in early infancy from a relational perspective, compared to Freud's biological closed system, even though there are some theoretical differences among object-relations theorists.<sup>44</sup> Melanie Klein, the foremost object relations theorist and an orthodox Freudian, diverges from Freud because of her understanding of the infant as object oriented from birth.<sup>45</sup> Instead of agreeing with Freud that the drive is biological, sexual energy for tension reduction, she enunciates that objects are inherent in the drive. Drives possess inherent images of objects of the external world including one's images of body parts and mother images, which later can be experienced as real objects. Thus, the drive of psychic energy seeks not only sexual gratification but also gratification of relationships. And the gratification is usually experienced as either a love or death instinct. By projecting a death instinct to the outside object, an infant can maintain a good internal self. But this split process of projection and introjection continues in forming one's perception of the world, even in understanding one's bodily sensations and experiences. However, a child needs to

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<sup>44</sup> For a discussion, see Melanie Klein "The Origin of Transference," The Selected Melanie Klein, ed. Juliet Mitchell (New York: Free Press, 1987), 205; and Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, Object Relations and Psychoanalytic Models (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 131-39.

See also W. R. D. Fairbairn, "A Revised Psychopathology of the Psychoses and Psychoneuroses," Essential Papers on Object Relations, ed. Peter Buckley (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 77; John McDargh, Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion (New York: University Press of America, 1984), 209; and W. Ronald D. Fairbairn's article "Steps in the Development of an Object-relations Theory and the Study of Religion," in his book Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality, 152-61.

<sup>45</sup> Samuel Slipp, Object Relations: A Dynamic Bridge between Individual and Family Treatment (Northvale, N.J.: Aronson, 1984), 46.

create a space where tension from the split can be released to maintain a psychological balance. She explains the process as follows.

I have come to the conclusion that this splitting of the super-ego into the primal identifications introjected at different stages of development is a mechanism analogous to and closely connected with projection. I believe these mechanism (splitting-up and projection) are a principal factor in the tendency to personification in play. By their means the synthesis of the super-ego, which can be maintained only with more or less effort, can be given up for the time being and, further, the tension of maintaining the truce between the super-ego as a whole and the id is diminished. The intrapsychic conflict thus becomes less violent and can be displaced into the external world.<sup>46</sup>

For Klein, the drive energy is not physical but is derived from psychological forces which seek to relate with objects, and the body is the channel for the expression of the drives, not the source of the energy. Nonetheless, her theory still remains strongly aligned with Freud's biological, psychosexual theory and does not explain the dynamics between a self and the society.

While criticizing Klein for her biologically oriented theory, W. R. Fairbairn argues that the drive is primarily object-seeking. He asserts "(1) that libidinal 'aims' are of secondary importance in comparison with object-relationships, and (2) that a relationship with the object, and not gratification of impulse, is the ultimate aim of libidinal striving."<sup>47</sup> If an experience with an object is satisfactory, the ego remains whole. But if the experience is not favorable, then the ego creates a substitute internal object which will satisfy the need for good object relationships while repressing "intolerably bad internalized objects."<sup>48</sup> As a result, an infant creates good and bad objects according to experiences, but to survive emotionally an infant represses internalized bad objects. For example, when an infant

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<sup>46</sup> Melanie Klein, Love, Guilt and Reparation (New York: Delacorte, 1975), 205.

<sup>47</sup> W. Ronald D. Fairbairn, "The Repression and the Return of Bad Object (with special reference to the 'War Neurosis')," Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality, 60.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

experiences a parent as a bad object, the infant prefers to be bad instead of having a bad parent due to a need for a sense of security from the external world. This is the process of repression of the internalization of bad objects.<sup>49</sup>

While Freud compartmentalized human psyche into three parts, Fairbairn views the ego itself as energy and the activity of the ego as object-seeking.<sup>50</sup> He asserts that,

If 'impulses' cannot be considered apart from objects, whether external or internal, it is equally impossible to consider them apart from ego structures. Indeed it is even more impossible to consider 'impulses' apart from ego structures, since it is only ego structures that can seek relationships with objects. We are thus brought back to the conclusion, already recorded, that 'impulses' are but the dynamic aspect of endopsychic structures and cannot be said to exist in the absence of such structures, however immature these may turn out to be. Ultimately 'impulses' must be simply regarded as constituting the forms of activity in which the life of ego structures consists.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, for Fairbairn, ego is not a separate component as in Freud's tripart structure, but is an integral structure which seeks objects with which to relate. And the perception of self relies heavily on an infant's early life experiences with the primary caretaker and others. Further, healing toward wholeness--salvation-- involves exposing the repressed bad object, which was once indispensable for the psyche, and dissolving it.<sup>52</sup>

D. W. Winnicott, who is influenced by Klein, further underscores the interaction of the infant with the mother, focusing on mothering. If an infant can receive good enough mirroring from the mother, the infant can give up omnipotent control over the mother and separate from her in a healthy way because an infant can create sufficient basic trust and

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>50</sup> For a comparative argument between Freud and Fairbairn's ego concepts, see Fairbairn, "Steps in the Development of an Object-Relations Theory of the Personality," in Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality, 152-61.

<sup>51</sup> W. Ronald D. Fairbairn, "Endopsychic Structure Considered in Terms of Object-Relationships," in Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality, 88.

<sup>52</sup> Guntrip, 185.

security to internalize the good mother function. Then, the infant can transfer the dependent attachment to another object, a "transitional object."<sup>53</sup> First the transitional object is part of the infant's body, which satisfies his or her instinctual need. Then other external objects become transitional objects which provide psychic space. This permits an infant to go through emotional separation from a subject-object symbiotic state to a subject-object separate state, so that an infant can perceive the external world as a separate reality from her or himself. Winnicott insists that a mother's non-demanding presence is needed for a child to experience self without anxiety. He also emphasizes the continuity of mothering by one person so that a child does not waste energy in the reparative process.<sup>54</sup>

The main points of object-relations theory include the following concepts. When a baby is born, she or he does not have an awareness of I and others. A baby starts to form the concept of self and the world from the interaction with mother. At first a baby has no awareness of the world, mother, and self as separate beings. Gradually, a baby can differentiate self from mother, and gains a sense of separate self. When an infant experiences good, satisfying relationships with objects, the ego remains integral and whole. If the relations are not satisfactory, the ego creates compensatory internal objects in an attempt to have satisfactory relationships. Play or fantasy is important for a child's healthy growth since this is the way a child regulates her or himself and relates to objects and the environment.<sup>55</sup> However, if an infant cannot fully differentiate a created inner object due to the absence of satisfactory relationships, that infant will seek satisfying relationships throughout life without having a good image of self. Thus, the early experience of integrating the external and internal world establishes a pattern of relating and

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<sup>53</sup> Greenberg and Mitchell, 196.

<sup>54</sup> D. W. Winnicott, Human Nature (New York: Schocken, 1988), 72.

<sup>55</sup> Slipp, 43.

structuring, which influences the later process of integrating. Healing toward wholeness is the renunciation of split internal objects which build self-destructive defenses within the self, and involves restoring the relationship and a healthy separation with mother.

*Object-relations theory not only emphasizes the human need to relate from the beginning of life, but also emphasizes the quality of interaction between an infant and mother or caretaker in the early process of psychological formation. Therefore, a good external world is essential for the process of healthy maturing. Then, the question is whether Korean society provides a positive environment or facilitates the process of good mothering to raise infants-- especially female infants--as healthy members of the society.*

As object-relations theory asserts, if a baby girl receives negative feedback from family members because of her gender, and the mother is depressed and dissatisfied with her role, that baby is destined to form a negative self-image from the very moment of birth--and even before birth if the mother's feelings are communicable to the unborn. From the beginning of her life in a patriarchal society, a baby girl is destined to form a negative image of herself.<sup>56</sup> A mother in traditional Korean society, and even in modern society, has been the tool for producing a son to continue the family's name and blood. When a woman has a baby girl, it is natural for heightened tension and deep distress to occur. Winnicott asserts that a child needs positive mirroring to have a healthy self-image. Thus, a baby girl is vulnerable in the formation of a healthy self-image since the feeling of subtle discrimination is sensed beyond the cognitive level, which creates a permanent, unconscious feeling of inferiority.

Many of the interviewees in this study share their acute pain caused by the discrimination of their parents, and from their experiences it can be presumed that this negative discrimination began in the very early stages of life. Moreover, the mother herself

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<sup>56</sup> Griffin, 210.

internalizes the social values and sets a double standard for the daughter. One woman in this study gives a tearful account of her *han* caused by discrimination.

I was quiet and very introspective, but I had this strong rebellious feeling of anger toward my mother. If it had been my father, then my pain would have been less. But my mother, even though she was a woman, treated me so differently from her other children, sons. I thought and believed that a double standard was the norm. But, soon I found out she treated me differently because I was a girl. There was different food for boys and girls, and I was never allowed to touch anything belonging to my brothers. I swore to myself that I wouldn't be like my mother. Then I realized with surprise sometime ago that I, after all, was like my mother.

Because of the mother's internalization of the social value which considers man superior, the love-hate relationship between daughter and mother becomes deep. In addition to women's internalization of the social values, when a woman is not satisfied with herself or the outside world, the mother cannot provide a child with an accepting, positive feeling or attitude. However subtle the internalization may be, it will influence a child through the mothering process as Winnicott's theory asserts. Also, as Fairbairn's theory advocates, a child internalizes the bad feelings of a caretaker and forms a negative perception of self. Therefore, even though long periods of nurturing, good skin contact, and mothers' sacrificial love have been the strength of Korean society, unless the society changes its attitude toward women and girls, women cannot give their children the nurturing needed to develop "real selves,"<sup>57</sup> and the impact of insufficient mothering upon children will influence the entire society.

If a child needs a mother who can nurture a baby with consistency and love, does this mean that women should be solely responsible for raising children? Does mothering alone have a positive function in children's psychological formation, and what would be the impact of the absence of the father in shaping a child's psychology? Nancy Chodorow elaborately develops her theory about the impact of asymmetrical child rearing on a child's

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<sup>57</sup> Greenberg and Mitchell, 195.



psychological development by focusing on the preoedipal stage--how mothering perpetuates the cycle of reproducing stereotyped males and females in our patriarchal society.<sup>58</sup>

She argues that the absence of a father in a home prohibits a healthy psychological development for both a daughter and a son. A mother relates to her daughter as an extension of herself throughout her lifetime, which results in boundary confusion and the lack of a sense of separateness in the daughter. For a son, it is easier to differentiate from his mother not only in terms of a different sexual identity, but also because of the mother's push for this differentiation. However, a son has to repress his feeling of ties with his mother to identify with his masculine father, who lacks an affectionate and relational dimension. Moreover, due to the father's absence, a son fantasizes and idealizes his father as a masculine role model, which is an exaggeration of the cultural definition of masculinity. Also, mothers who are embedded in an ideology of masculine superiority tend to idealize their invisible husbands so that they are looked up to by their children. A boy builds his self-image on society's idealization of masculinity while he rejects too much mothering, by which he feels suffocated, and resents the mother or experiences her as if she is cold and rejecting. A boy both admires and fears his mother, and a man who is brought up in asymmetrical parenting seeks a wife who will be non-threatening, undemanding, dependent, and infantile--a woman who is simple, safe, and warm.<sup>59</sup> Instead of enhancing well integrated maturity, society, which forces men to be outside of the home, not only divides roles for women and men but also continuously creates women and men as defined by the culture, resulting in the unbalanced self.

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<sup>58</sup> Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 79-185.

Even though Chodorow's theory (as well as object-relation theories) has a danger of blaming women, Chodorow's theory can be utilized to understand the Korean family system since a father--who is critical for infant personality development in the integration of both femininity and masculinity--is absent in many Korean families. The absence of the father in the Korean family is due to the traditional role definition of Korean women as the sole educators of children. In addition, under Japanese colonization and during the Korean War, fathers were absent from many homes due to exile or death, and women had to support men and families. In present Korean society, a higher value is placed on the work group or organization than on the family. We-ness and a group-oriented national personality perpetuate men's alienation from the home. Men are in the public domain and create relationships among themselves outside of the home. Nonetheless, in the absence of the father, as Chodorow asserts, Korean women fiercely educate the children regarding the social norm which protects the authority of the father.

With two exceptions, all of the women interviewed for this study had extremely limited relationships with their fathers due to the fathers' absence from home, either physically or emotionally. A couple of the women expressed a strong hatred toward their fathers, but more or less, most did not have much to share about them. This explains how the father's absence in the Korean family structure also perpetuates the "mothering process," as in Chodorow's theory. In addition, many of the interviewees know that their husbands have inner weaknesses, and these women actually support the family in crises. But they try very hard to maintain the image and pride of their husbands in the society, and the family members internalize the socially-defined role more fiercely. A woman in her 70s, who had to take care of her entire family and her sick husband for more than 25 years, shares her feelings.

I was so thankful to my husband. He is the man who gave me my children. I could overcome the suffering of life because he was alive, even though he was paralyzed. I kept telling my children how to behave and how to respect their father all the time. I gave all the money I earned to my husband, so

that he could give it to the children. Also, even though sometimes he could not think clearly, I always asked his permission and followed his orders.

In addition to the above psychodynamic explanation, in the Korean family structure a mother has strong relationships with her children because of the skin culture. As a result of constant contact between a mother and a child, the bond between the two grows stronger. Moreover, women tie themselves strongly to children since society perceives them only as child-bearers and caretakers. Thus, Korean women internalize their value as mothers, and a son becomes a person who can live out the mother's dream in life.<sup>60</sup> The bond between mother and son creates a love-hate conflict, which the son replays with his wife and mother as a triangle in his marriage. He projects the negative image of his mother upon his wife, relieving his guilt from hating his mother who suffocated him psychologically, while demanding absolute obedience from his wife as his mother sacrificed completely for him. By doing this, he can relate to his mother in a positive way, not only for psychological reasons but also because society's norm demands that children relate to their parents only in a positive way. Furthermore, due to the society's value and ethical norm, it is almost impossible for a man to differentiate from his family of origin, especially from his mother who devoted her life to the son's interest. Rather, separation (psychological or physical) is not needed for a man in the extended family system because his wife is the only person who has to separate from her family and belong to the husband's family. This is one of the causes of conflict between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law which creates the painful *han* of Korean women, forcing them to victimize themselves. On the other hand, a mother identifies strongly with her daughter, and projects her self-hatred for being a woman to her daughter while creating a love-hate relationship. A mother lets her daughter internalize the social role to adjust better in the society, and the daughter repeats the cycle in her marriage.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 196.

Therefore, in the Korean extended family system, a boy goes through a temporary love-hate separation from his mother in the early years, but never separates from his family or his mother. While a girl may not face separation from her mother in the early years, she has to separate as much as possible from her family of origin after marriage--both physically and emotionally--and the more she separates from her family, the better she is according to society's value. Still, she identifies with her mother without knowing how to separate, reliving her mother's *han*, consciously and unconsciously.

A patriarchal social structure relegates women into lower positions and binds them into the private domain, while men live in the public. If a child is reared with shared parenting, a child will not be bound by stereotyped gender roles, which will allow her or him to have the freedom to choose a lifestyle. A child will learn to value the free individual choice in life. Then, there will be no devaluation of mothering or of the caretaker role, and no limitation will be placed on a person's right to choose her or his own life.

Hence, the process of interaction between women's inner psychological world and the patriarchal society is very much interrelated. In Korea, the influence of the society on an individual woman's psychology is stronger than that of Western society since Korean culture emphasizes relatedness and conformity. Because of the fused boundary between the inner and outer world, there is confusion of self with another: guilt and self-blame for an other's unhappiness, and shame and embarrassment at an other's action.<sup>61</sup> This inclination of women is also enforced by the society's ethical code of conduct for women in traditional society. If anything happens in the husband's family, the blame falls upon the wife's head. If the family is not happy for any reason, the daughter-in-law becomes the scapegoat. A daughter witnesses her mother's life and consequently many interviewees

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<sup>61</sup> Nancy Chodorow, "Family Structure and Feminine Personality," Woman, Culture and Society, eds. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 58.

express not only their anger but also their mother's anger. The *han* of the mother is deeply rooted in the daughter's heart, enacted in every moment of her own *hanful* life experiences.

This diffused responsibility for everything connected with the welfare of her family, and the happiness and success of her children, is the predominant psychological state of the modern Korean woman. This creates competition among children due to excessive feelings of responsibility, and also because of the Korean view of children as bearers of past and future life. The sense of responsibility also perpetuates a mother's need for self-realization through children, resulting in her feeling a loss of self because society acknowledges her only as a mother. She is likely to invest a large amount of anxious energy and concern in her children, and her self-esteem is dependent on the lives of others. But due to over protection, in many cases the children become either abusive or fail to meet her high expectations. Many interviewees express their resentment toward their children. One mother admits,

I only live for them. But, all of a sudden I realized they are they. They never can be me. And they want to live their own life. I started to worry about my future, wondering what my existence will be for them. Am I going to be a burden? Or are they going to still respect me as they grow up? Deep sorrow started to emerge from my gut. I cried all day and I look at myself asking what I did for my life.

This woman at age 50, realizes the separation between her children and herself as a sudden enlightenment. But, after this insight, she still worries about her children and thinks and lives deeply only for the children's sake. I left her home questioning who is going to pay for her life.

A person needs to know how to relate and separate in healthy ways. But the process has to be learned from early childhood, since this pattern will be repeated in later life. From learning to relate and separate with both parents, a child can have a strong sense of self, with real independence, which allows for care, nurture, and relatedness as well as firmness and strength. Not only does a child face the task of separation in order to grow,

but every human being constantly goes through the process of relating and separating from birth to death.

This process of relating and separating is the process of growth throughout one's life. Developmental theorist Erik Erikson expands the concept of growth from adolescence to the whole human life cycle. As with any other stage theory, Erikson's developmental theory has the following theoretical framework: (1) there are stages in human development; (2) the change in structure occurs when the equilibrium is broken; (3) the previous stage is incorporated in the next stage while transforming the stage, and the new stage is incorporated into next stage again; and (4) there are eight hypothetical stages, and these are universal and invariant.<sup>62</sup> These stages are not chronological, but the sequence is invariant.

In each stage there are two polarities, which does not mean an entity or concrete structure in the psyche, but attitudes toward self and the world. Healthy growth depends on personal flexibility and how well a person integrates the two polarities, such as trust vs. mistrust, while keeping a balance between the poles with endurance and perseverance. If a crisis of a stage is unresolved, future stages throughout the life span will be influenced psychologically. And yet, it is always possible to rework incomplete stages. Therefore, a person orients in the world from a dialectical interaction between self and society throughout one's life cycle. Erikson's concept of psychosocial development integrates depth psychology with cognitive and ego psychology, which takes into account the community's influence on the individual.

However, in spite of the theory's openness to environmental influences upon individual psychology, Erikson does not deal with the different social condition for women. His observations of human growth among children in early stages are only a

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<sup>62</sup> See Erik H. Erikson, The Life Cycle Completed (New York: Norton, 1982); and Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: Norton, 1959), 53-54.

description of the phenomena which are already influenced by society. And, the polar values such as intimacy or generativity are not just values of later stages, but are the values women seek throughout life. His description of the inner space, as the symbol of a woman in need of a male to fulfill her everlasting loneliness, is also criticized from a feminist perspective because of its male-biased interpretation. Erikson's theory, therefore, is a male-biased theory founded on Western society.

In spite of the lack of cultural and gender differences, Erikson's theory can be utilized as a working hypothesis. Korean society values healthy dependency and conformity to the social norm from the first stage to the last, not the autonomy or separation of Western culture or of Erikson's theoretical hypothesis. But autonomy and separation are exactly what Korean women and men need to learn, not because society seeks those values but because it has over-emphasized the other dimension.

To understand the growth process of Korean women, cultural and women's issues have to be examined. As a Korean and as a woman, there are specific issues to be dealt with during particular periods in the growth process of women such as external influences, biological differences, and women's different value systems which provide different experiences throughout their lives.<sup>63</sup> As discussed above, a person interacts with the social environment in forming psychological reality. If so, one of the most important factors of socialization--gender internalization--starts to force both men and women to internalize the social myth of gender differences from birth.<sup>64</sup> Through socialization, gender roles are internalized by both women and men as the powerless and powerful. The process of internalization of gender-roles in patriarchal societies is similar in spite of

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<sup>63</sup> Penelop Washbourn asserts that menstruation is the most critical crisis for a woman. But, childbearing and nurturing are also women's biological functions which shape women's developmental stages differently from men's. See Washbourn, "Becoming Woman: Menstruation as Spiritual Challenge", Womanspirit Rising, 247.

<sup>64</sup> Lipman-Blumen, 76-92.

cultural differences. There are many similarities between the process of internalization for Korean women and that of Western women, which are analyzed below.

Once a woman internalizes the feeling of being a powerless person, she tries to be a lesser being by fulfilling society's definition of women. Jean Baker Miller notes that while the powerful define the powerless as inferior, even the powerless cannot believe in their abilities.<sup>65</sup> Because the powerless have to survive, they tend not to disturb the powerful.<sup>66</sup> Thus, persons who believe themselves to be powerful create an illusion from the fear of facing reality. As Ann Schaef argues in her book, When Society Becomes an Addict, men believe that the patriarchal system is the only one which is best for both men and women without ever trying to understand how the oppressed group might feel. Women, who are closer to nature, tend to accept life more easily with more inner strength. However, because of the social system, women are suffering not only from external conditions, but also from an inner inferiority complex by which they victimize themselves. A woman in her 40s relates,

I wanted to do something meaningful. But, I couldn't continue anything. I got bored easily. I think I don't have any talent or ability to do anything. I think I am not good enough except for cooking and cleaning. But, still inside of my heart, I want to do something meaningful.

Instead of understanding her desire to realize herself, she easily concedes and believes that she lacks the power or ability to do anything; but there is still a sense of longing for her own identity.

Freud's explanation of women's psychology may describe the result of women's socialization, rather than women's innate nature. Society conditions women to be subordinate from birth, which causes suffering, *han*, from living without full freedom. The desire to have good object-relationships with others and self may not be possible in the

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<sup>65</sup> Jean Baker Miller, Toward a New Psychology (Boston: Beacon, 1976), 7.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.



oppressed system. As an oppressed group, women internalize the oppressor's image of themselves as true, and become silent by losing their abilities to hear their inner voices. Women become disconnected not only from themselves, but also from others and the world. Because of internalization of the oppressor's belief, women have lost the ability to challenge the reality for change.

Korean women inherit the Korean personality as an ethos which has its own strengths and weaknesses. The weaknesses result from an over emphasis on the cultural value of relatedness and community consciousness. Korean women lose their identity or autonomy and become unable to have a healthy interdependency which will enhance their creativity and possibilities in life. Thus, Korean women need to be aware of their inner psychological reality and also challenge the cause of it, while nurturing their inner strength. This will be possible by hearing each other's inner voices, which will not only heal individual wounds but also restore the disconnected relatedness. The community will suffer from the *han* of the oppressed without wholeness, unless women have the power freely to choose their lives.

### Quest for Self

One of the most painful experiences of the interviewees in this study is their confusion about themselves. Many of them cannot clearly state their understanding of self. In spite of their unclear understanding, however, many interviewees clearly articulate their strong desire to know themselves and envision their identities as independent, mature beings. If identity confusion is a problem from which Korean women suffer, then the question is how the self can be understood and how maturity and integrity can be achieved for Korean women. Following is an effort to grasp the concept of self from the perspective of Korean women.

### Self and Boundary

All of the interviewees are struggling with the feeling of loss of self and self identity. Living the norm defined by others, women feel they are wearing a mask, a false

self which is alienated from the true self. They feel a void in their lives--an existential emptiness which is different from that of men--and deep resentment from not having a chance for a fair opportunity to learn. They seem to believe that if they had a better education they would be able to more fully actualize their lives. Learning and improving themselves are the motivating forces for Korean women in spite of the external, oppressive forces.

A seventy-year-old women, who is now living with her daughter in America, reveals her *han*. She is questioning the meaning of her life, and the value of herself.

I hope that I can be buried at my family's mountain where all my ancestors are sleeping. Now, I have no desire, no need for good material things. During the night when I can't sleep, I think about my life over and over, feeling so painful. I feel much emptiness. There is nothing left for me. I wonder whether I lived the right way. Is it life for me?

A woman who became a widow with three children at a young age speaks of her *han*.

I remember the death of my father vividly; he died when I was three years old. I always think about the old saying, "a daughter's fate will be like her mother's." My mother lives with me. She still tells me what to eat, what to wear, whether I should remarry or not. I am sick and tired of her attitude. Even though I need to treat her well, I abuse her in many ways. . . . My husband died as my father when he was only 40. Prophecy came true. First, I was dismayed. But, I couldn't stand the long waiting for my husband's burial at the memorial cemetery because he was in the army. They waited until a certain number of corpses were gathered. You know, it was such a long time. I was in such a hurry to do something for my family, it made me really anxious. I did not care what other people might think of my working right after my husband's death. I heard that some of them, actually most of them who were wives of my husband's friend, said that I am a devilish wife who killed her husband. I was supposed to mourn for a long period. But, my strength comes from my need to support my children . . . I did my best. They are all educated. But, who am I? I sincerely hope to die at any moment. Life has been too tiring. I think I may kill myself someday.

Besides her *han* as a widow, this woman is suffering from a symbiotic, diffused relationship with her mother who is also a widow. It seems that her mother lives a *hanful* life and her only hope has been her daughter; but both mother and daughter are suffering from their love-hate relationship. This relationship is the result of the victimization of women who are bound by society's ethic, because Korean society does not yet consider

with favor the remarriage of a widow. Without much hope or faith in the future, this woman's *han* leads to thoughts of self-destruction.

A middle-aged mother with three children shares her *han* story. She is suffering from feelings of inferiority and is angry at her father. He refused to send her to college because of their financial situation, even though he himself was a university professor and spent money on his own interests. She is convinced that if she had been a boy, her parents would have sent her to college.

After all the pain I went through, I tried to understand my father and believed that it was my fault I couldn't go to college. I hated my father, but now I realize my part of the responsibility. The pain of not going to college is still there. Every year around examination season, I feel pain in my heart. But I try not to think of the pain, and try to reconcile myself to God. The reason I felt so weak and stupid may be because my father had scolded me all the time. . . . I want to be acknowledged as I am. I really wish people would acknowledge me as I am, not because of other things-- not the degree. Even at church, I have been acknowledged not because of myself, but because of my husband's status. I don't like it. You may not know the feeling of wanting to be acknowledged. . . . But now I have completed four years of Bible study at [a] Korean church. I never missed one class. I liked the last question of the assignment which asked us to reflect on our own life. I know God acknowledges me, but I want to have my own identity. . . . I used to live for my husband, then my son. But I decided to come to America with my husband and other two children even though my first son has to prepare for college entrance exams. People think it is not the right way for a mother who has a senior student. Nobody understood me. But, I had to make this decision. I wanted to live my life for myself this time. I cannot live always for others. Maybe I have started to gain my identity.

She is suffering from negative feedback from her father, and the lost opportunity for a college education because of being female. Even after growing up, she is still suffering from not having an identity. Her *han* also reflects classism in Korea where intellectuals are highly regarded and laborers are treated as a lower class. But this woman connects her feeling of non-identity to not having an education, without being aware of the average woman's psychological situation in a patriarchal society.

Another mother of two sons shares her life journey for identity.

I am trying hard to find myself now. Right now I feel like I am nothing. I failed in my marriage, and with my children. Sometimes I go to a shamaness, and sometimes I go to a psychiatrist. Both of them help me in a different way. I think I am on the way to finding myself. Soon I hope I

can find it. After I become independent from my husband, I want to do something for other people. I know my soul will continue to live after death. And the quality of my soul at the end of my life will be the starting point of my eternal life. I will continue to seek what is true.

We can hear her agony of a *hanful* life, but we also hear her effort to try to be herself. As Belenky's study shows, when a woman starts to question her own identity, she more often starts to take action without a clear picture of her future.<sup>67</sup> She wants to gain her own self identity, not in isolation from others, but from the connection with others which is a different quality of relationship.

As the analysis of this research reveals, the most acute *han* is in the areas of self, loss of self, and self-realization. The women suffer and question the meaning of life and the loss of self throughout their life journeys. After devoting their lives completely to the family, they do not feel their lives are fulfilled, but rather experience emptiness and self-negation. However, self-assertion, the need for identity, and the determination to take action for one's life are evident. But the self conceived by most of the interviewees is not by any means limited to the individual self, but is connected to children, family members, ancestors, and other people. Their future hopes are not just for their own self-realization, but include others in the community who need their warm and strong hands. The awareness of self can be attained only through relationships. Heinz Kohut explicates clearly the interaction between self and the environment in forming one's self. He writes,

Throughout life a person will experience himself as a cohesive, harmonious, firm unit in time and space, connected with his past and pointing meaningfully into a creative and productive future only as long as, at each stage of his life, he experiences certain representatives of his human surroundings as joyfully responding to him, as available to him as a source of idealized strength and calmness, as being silently present but in essence like him, and, at any rate, able to grasp his inner life more or less accurately

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<sup>67</sup> Belenky et al., 80.

so that their responses are attuned to his needs and allow him to quest their inner life when he is in need of such sustenance.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, differentiation is not separateness or isolation, but rather a healthy way to relate to others-- which is possible from a positive experience in early life.

The concept of self may be understood as a clear awareness of one's psychological boundary and its permeability in relation to the psychological spheres of others. Strength does not depend on the firmness of a boundary, but how stabilized one feels within a relationship and how much one can get in touch with inner power. For a woman, the outer boundary is permeable, flexible, malleable, but she experiences the inner power which is connected to other human beings and also to the universe because of this permeability. But the inner self shrinks due to social restrictions, while the outer psychological self-boundary is more often absorbed in relatedness. Because of this shrinkage, a woman feels trapped and inferior. The inner power of life energy cannot be fully activated but, in times of need, the shrunken self is strengthened and expands. The social restriction, not the permeable boundary, demands that a woman be a non-being with no sense of self energy. A boundary must be penetrated in order to develop genuine relationships and share inner life energy with others, and yet a boundary has to exist to build a sense of self. Without a sense of self, one cannot establish true relationships with others. A woman innately wants to be connected with other human beings while nurturing others, but the patriarchal society forces her to lose her whole identity. Thus, women suffer from a lack of self identity while absorbed in relatedness, which provokes anxiety and pain without giving meaning to their lives. Their permeable ego boundaries, which are necessary for good interdependency, are obscured in unbalanced power relationships between male and female. In order to develop

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<sup>68</sup> Heinz Kohut, How Does Analysis Cure? (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), cited in Lionel Finkelstein, "Toward Object-Relations Approach in Psychoanalytic Marital Therapy," Journal of Marital and Family Therapy 13 (July 1987): 293.

healthy interdependency, the fundamental power structure of a patriarchal society has to be restructured to empower people.

### Self: Polarity and Harmony

This study has discussed the process of differentiation of self, and the psychological boundary of women. Then, the question is how to define self, which varies among disciplines and cultures. There are many differences in the understanding of self between Western and Eastern thought. These differences can be clarified if similar theories are compared, as in the case of Jung's theories and the polarity principle in *I Ching*.

Jung attempts to integrate the dualistic polarity in Western thought, which is in a certain sense similar to the polarity of *I Ching*.<sup>69</sup> He explicates that a human being's present self is conditioned by individual and racial history as casualty, and by aspirations and aims for the future. He further submits that a human being goes through the process of growing toward wholeness and the completion of self, and yearns for rebirth.<sup>70</sup> The most distinctive contribution of Jung's psychology is the concept of collective unconsciousness which is a residue accumulated through repeated experiences over many generations, not only from the racial history of humans but also from the prehuman or animal ancestry.<sup>71</sup> Archetypes are structural forms of the collective unconscious which contain certain elements of emotion, and if one experiences corresponding emotions in the waking state, an archetype can become conscious. If polarities in the archetypes are not integrated into

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<sup>69</sup> See Carl G. Jung, Psychology and Religion: West and East, vol. 2 of Collected Works of C. G. Jung, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pars. 759-787 for his own understanding of the differences between Eastern and Western thinking. See also Naomi Goldenberg, "A Feminist Critique of Jung," and Demaris Wehr, "A Feminist Perspective on Jung's Concept of the Archetype," Women's Spirituality, 150-58 and 159-67 for criticism from a woman's perspective. The researcher of this dissertation also acknowledges the inherent male bias in Jung's theory, but it is worthwhile to compare Jung's polarity principle and *yin* and *yang* polarity due to the similar structure of their theories.

<sup>70</sup> Jung, Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, vol. 9ii of CW, 1-42.

<sup>71</sup> See Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, vol. 9i of CW, 87-110.

the consciousness, the richness of creativity diminishes and a person becomes neurotic--being overwhelmed by his or her collective unconscious.<sup>72</sup> The archetype in Jung's psychology is a priori not filled with content, but merely comprises the possibility of a certain type of perception and action.<sup>73</sup> Archetypes contain polarity in themselves, and these polarities are internally self-contradictory.<sup>74</sup> Among the many polarities, the anima and animus are the archetypes which exist in man and woman according to gender. Jung explains the archetype of female in male.

Every man carries within him the eternal image of woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definitive feminine image. This image is . . . an imprint or "archetype" of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit, as it were, of all the impressions ever made by woman . . . . Since this image is unconscious, it is always unconsciously projected upon the person of the beloved, and is one of the chief reasons for passionate attraction or aversion.<sup>75</sup>

According to Jung, the individuation process is the search for the original wholeness given to a human being--the self. Becoming one's own self, which embraces the "innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness," can be described as "coming to selfhood" or "self-realization."<sup>76</sup> Thus, a person gains greater freedom and moves toward an individuated state. The process of individuation takes several steps. Unveiling the persona which protects the self from the outside world by choosing the most appropriate mask to the world is the first step. The second step is to confront the shadow which is the dark side of

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<sup>72</sup> Jung, Aion: Research into Phenomenology of the Self, vol. 9 of CW, for various archetypes.

<sup>73</sup> Marie-Luise Von Franz argues that Jung himself was not clear on the concept of archetype until his later work. See Marie-Louise Von Frans, C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time, trans. William H. Kennedy (New York: Putnam, 1975), 125 for the discussion, and see also Demari S. Wehr, Jung and Feminism: Liberating Archetypes (Boston: Beacon, 1987), 51.

<sup>74</sup> James Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 156.

<sup>75</sup> Carl G. Jung, "Marriage as a Psychological Relationship," in Development of Personality, vol. 17 of C.W., 198.

<sup>76</sup> Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, vol 7 of CW, 202-95.

a person. The third step is to confront the anima or animus which needs to be integrated in self. From this process, one can discover one's own individuality, and no longer is under the influence of unknowing unconscious power. The individuated self which is the center of the personality will direct a person.

The more we become conscious of ourselves through self-knowledge, and act accordingly, the more the layer of the personal unconscious that is superimposed on the consciousness is no longer imprisoned in the petty, oversensitive, personal world of objective interests. This widened consciousness is no longer that touchy, egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes, and ambitions which always has to be compensated or corrected by unconscious counter tendencies; instead, it is a function of relationship to the world of objects, bringing the individual into absolute, binding, and indissoluble communion with the world at large.<sup>77</sup>

According to Jung, the above process of individuation can be achieved through several functions of the psyche. The transcendent function is the union of opposites and the source of psychic energy.<sup>78</sup> It has the capacity to unite all of the opposing polarities of the systems toward selfhood. The aim of the transcendent function is the "realization of the personality, the production and unfolding of the original, potential wholeness."<sup>79</sup> The self represents the core center in which one can make connection with the numinous world. By connecting to the inner self, a person can touch the collective unconscious, the world of the numinous. From this connectedness to the world of numinous, a person can gain the authentic individuality which is fundamentally connected to all of life.

Jung's emphasis on both femininity and masculinity within a person--the integration of both polarities--and his psychological explanation for spiritual connectedness with the self and the universe opened a new realm in Western psychology where spirituality

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<sup>77</sup> Jung, "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious," in Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, vol. 7 of CW, 176.

<sup>78</sup> See Jung, "Transcendent Function," in The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, vol. 8 of CW.

<sup>79</sup> Jung, "The Psychology of the Unconscious," in Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, vol. 7 of CW, 108.



usually has been disregarded. However, Jung's description of the self is ambiguous. Self is sometimes described as the goal of individuation, and also as a process or dynamic which cannot be completely gained by human beings and can be understood only through symbols. Also, Jung's self presupposes that self is the main operator in the consciousness, and plays the same role in men and women. Therefore, his theory fails to define the different qualities of self in men and women. Furthermore, his concept of self is fundamentally separatistic and individualistic, and seeks relatedness with the whole as a final aim.

As previously discussed, a woman first has to acknowledge the false self image created by man, establishing a proper boundary around her ego rather than surrendering.<sup>80</sup> To integrate his ego and the collective unconscious, a man may have to surrender his inflated ego formed through patriarchy, and learn how to relate. However, instead of connectedness to oneself, others and nature, Jung emphasizes the separation and annihilation of the ego. When he explains the feminine principle as Eros (which is relatedness) and the masculine principle as Logos (which is discrimination, judgment, insight, and relation to nonpersonal truth), he cannot avoid the danger of allowing certain culturally-biased values about women to surface, while excluding other values which also exist in women as well as in men. Thus, femininity in Jung becomes a biologically inherited, innate trait which is an ontological condition.

Because of Jung's social conditioning, his hypotheses were drawn from his own personal experience of the feminine; he could not avoid the limitation of anima/animus in his theory. According to Jung, animus in women is the simple expansion of anima in man - a conclusion which is built upon his experience as a man. In spite of his own assertion of

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<sup>80</sup> Catherine Keller discusses the danger of speaking about women's spirituality as all connected without clarification, since connectedness can be a mere immanence. See Keller "Feminism and the Ethic of Inseparability," *Women's Consciousness/ Women's Conscience*, eds. Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, Christine E. Gudorf, and Mary D. Pellauer (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 251-63.

anima as an archetype, a structural component, Jung frequently confused it with his actual experiences with women who, as individuals, had internalized society's patriarchal oppression.

Jung's view of human nature is teleological, optimistic, and trusting in human capacity. However, under the influence of the German mystical and Hegelian tradition of dialectical polarity, Jung's theory has its roots in patriarchal oppositionalism. The supposition in his theory is that the two-polarity principle is not changeable and autonomous in personified form, which is internally self-contradictory. Further, his theory is closed to social influence on the psyche, particularly in regard to women.

In Confucianism, the way for a person to be a right self is to know the Cosmic Tao, Universal Way, and follow *Tao*.<sup>81</sup> The universe and human beings comprise the two polarity principle of *yin* and *yang*.<sup>82</sup> Even though *yin* and *yang* appears to be similar to anima/animus, they have fundamental differences. In Jung's theory there is no change in quality between anima and animus. But in Confucian thought, *yin* is the state of *yang*'s dividedness, and *yang* is the state of *yin*'s union. Union occurs when *yin* expands; separation occurs when *yang* contracts. So there is no fixed condition--there exist only momentary modes in the process of change.<sup>83</sup> *Yin* and *yang* is not a polarity in conflict but exists in a harmonious, complementary state. Only the process of the moment is important. The world is dynamic, not static, and the relationship involves harmony, not separation. The qualities are equal, even though they are not identical. So the difference between male and female is phenomenological, not essential. One cannot exist in a harmoniously balanced state while oppressing the other, by not obeying the natural law. In

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<sup>81</sup> *Tao* is the basic metaphysical concept in *I Ching*, which is the first book of Confucian canon.

<sup>82</sup> The concept of yin/yang in this discussion refers to the early concept in Confucianism before the influence of patriarchal ideology.

<sup>83</sup> Jung Young Lee, 5.

fact, without the other, the one cannot exist. The internal oppositionalism in Jung's psychology does not appear in Confucianism's fundamental *yin* and *yang* theory. However, the polarity principle of *yin* and *yang* becomes dualistic in later patriarchal Confucianism.

There are fundamental differences between Jung's polarity and *I Ching*'s *yin* and *yang* polarity, in spite of their similar appearance. The Korean world-view is less dualistic compared to *I Ching*'s dualism in harmony. The non-dualistic world-view of the Korean people is manifested in the Korean language, which is a symbolic system of the people's collective world-view. The word Han denotes various meanings as a noun, adjective, adverb, suffix, and prefix. On the one hand, it denotes the wholeness and oneness which refers to the perfect harmonious state of connectedness; on the other hand, it denotes a part of the whole. By analyzing the word Han, Sang Yil Kim elaborates the authenticity of the Korean world-view which includes contradictory pairs of meanings.<sup>84</sup>

Han includes both polarities such as one/many, middle/peak, same/about. Han has both phenomenal and transcendent aspects.<sup>85</sup> For example, if it indicates the phenomenal aspect of one, it becomes a collective name for the many. If it indicates the transcending aspects of many, it becomes one.<sup>86</sup> There is no need for boundaries--one from many or many from one--because everything is interconnected. This concept is clearly illustrated in quantum physics where parts and the whole are interrelated, and in Whiteheadian philosophy where the many become one and are increased by one. Whitehead describes the ultimate principle as creativity by which the many become the one actual occasion.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Sang Il Kim, "What is Hanism?", 22.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>87</sup> Alfred N. Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Free Press, 1978), 21. as cited by Sang Il Kim.

Process emphases are connected with Korean personal characteristics, such as interrelatedness, inclusiveness, relatedness, and the permeability of boundaries. Thus, self in the Korean mind is not divided into polarities such as me/other, body/spirit, physical/metaphysical, or immanent/ transcendent.

Western culture focuses on the individual within the environment from a dualistic view of the world. However, the Eastern tradition relates the individual self to nature or the universe from a harmonious world-view. This means that while the Western concept emphasizes individuality which authentically values the separateness and the essence of the individual, Eastern thought emphasizes harmony and the universe. Eastern values emphasize the relatedness of every existence within the universe and individuality is immersed within the whole. Thus, the problem for women in the West comes from the negation of the feminine value of relatedness, which encourages separatism and devalues relatedness. But the problem for women in the East comes from the culture of relatedness which demands absolute absorption of the female self, since men's relatedness can be supported and sustained only through women's negation of their own identities.<sup>88</sup> The question is how can a woman attain the value of relatedness, while also attaining the value of appropriate separateness. As Han includes both one and many, the self in Korean culture resolves the internal conflict of polarity harmoniously by integrating and balancing the various aspects of self. Thus, the task for Korean women is how to have a self, as perceived in the Korean shamanistic mind, by having both separateness and relatedness.

A person can have intrinsic traits, but the separatistic view divides personality traits into feminine and masculine, attributing different values to each as illustrated in Jung's depth psychology. Being fully separated acknowledges the existence of psychic solitude, while being related means to be wholly shaped by and oriented to others, according to

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<sup>88</sup> Jean Baker Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," a paper presented at the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass., 1984, p. 2.

traditional concepts. But Valerie Saiving argues that no single person can be completely related or separated, feminine or masculine. Both relatedness and separateness, or femininity and masculinity, are mutually supportive and mutually necessary aspects of every experience.<sup>89</sup> From the process perspective, Saiving explains,

Not only are individuality and relatedness compatible aspects of every actuality, these two principles require each other. And since they require each other, neither is more real, important, or valuable than the other. Individuality and relatedness support and enhance one another.<sup>90</sup>

A process theologian, Catherine Keller, explicates that the self forms itself not through self-objectification or self-identity, but through a series of momentary experiences connected by the transitions.<sup>91</sup> The universe is composed of groups of societies of entities. A person experiences the society of entities through the body as a feeling under the body's coordination. Each body coordinates the society of entities from past experiences with freedom of choice and individuality, which is a creative and unique response, while the body is becoming a new body.<sup>92</sup> When a person is able to integrate more complex feelings, the person can cooperate with the multiple purposes of the universe, and the differentiation depends upon how a person is able to embrace his or her own freedom to build from the resources flowing in from reality.<sup>93</sup> Thus, when a person experiences a feeling without discriminating one's own feeling from another's, she or he tends to over-

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<sup>89</sup> Valerie C. Saiving, "A Feminist Appropriation of Process Thought," Feminism and Process Thought, ed. Sheila Davaney (New York: Mellen, 1981), 19.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>91</sup> Catherine Keller, From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 178

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

identify or to have indiscriminate relationships. If a person lacks the ability to integrate and experience feelings, one becomes isolated from oneself, others, and the universe.<sup>94</sup>

Similar to Process thoughts, in Korean though there is no separation between mind and body as in dualism. This can be explained as: I no longer exist without you as a part of myself. I can experience a feeling of being in the universe, and this feeling comes from accepting the relatedness of my feeling with other entities in the universe. Thus, I can either choose or negate the feeling and integrate it within me as a new awareness, changing myself into a new being every moment. In this conceptual framework, the process of becoming encompasses both relatedness and individuality.<sup>95</sup>

The metaphysical concept of self, from the process feminist perspective, invites us to see the possibility of a paradigmatic shift from the traditional, dualistic view of the West. The self in a process paradigm opens a new possibility to overcome the traditional separation between feminine and masculine or women and men, a separation which inevitably leads to conflict due to the tendency of human beings to see the other as "Other." This conceptual framework also helps to envision our future existential mode of being as related, and to become authentic individuals without sacrificing either men or women. It allows for a person, either woman or man, to choose the lifestyle in which she or he can experience the joy of being in the universe and participating in the process of God's creation.

In the Korean original world-view, there is no discrimination between male and female from a separatistic view. Due to non-orientation in Korean thought (described in Han) and the lack of boundary, it is unnatural for Korean people to have a boundary among their existences. However, patriarchy gradually builds the boundary among existences,

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 185.

and this has created the deepest pain, *han*, in the Korean mind. Han is wholeness and oneness, and *han* is the brokenness and separation of the whole.

One of the causes for Korean women's *han* is the loss of self due to the patriarchal society. Women suffer and wander throughout their entire lives without knowing themselves. However dimly they might feel, they also sense a strength deep within their souls which is connected to the power of the universe, and is the source of their continued vitality in this painful world. The problem for Korean women is not a particular existential mode, but the deprivation of the opportunity to live as they choose. If a woman is forced to choose a way of life other than the one she desires, the process deprives her of her life.

Loss of self can be regained only through the awareness of and remembering of the self and strength. As Mary Daly advocates, women need first to remember and connect the fragmented and dissolved self to be able to connect with others and the great force of nature.<sup>96</sup> Women have to remember that they once belonged to and were connected with the universe, Mother earth, primal power.<sup>97</sup> If one is allowed to choose the freedom to have an authentic individual and collective experience, one can connect to the power of the very being in the universe which naturally brings forth the creative living power within oneself. Inner knowing empowers women to think and act, free from the defined norms of patriarchy, and for this process a woman needs to feel Self-Centering, or to experience the deep Original Self of women which means participating in Be-ing.<sup>98</sup> With the power to be Self-Centering, a woman can weave the meaning of her life without losing herself, ever becoming a new being.

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<sup>96</sup> Mary Daly, Pure Lust (Boston: Beacon, 1984), 5.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

### Conclusion

Whether cultural value is separatistic or relational, a system has its own weaknesses and strengths. Maturity needs both separateness and relatedness, but neither Eastern or Western systems cannot enhance its members' wholistic growth because of each system's tendency to overemphasize its own values. Furthermore, in both systems, patriarchal culture has defined women's personality as if it is innate and unchangeable, and devalued those personality traits even though they are culturally constructed by men who have the power to define the norm. But all of the different traits have to be integrated to enrich one's life and to become whole. By limiting women in experiencing the diverse dimensions of the world, whether a culture's world-view is dualistic or wholistic, patriarchy usurps women's right to exist while increasing pain and *han* for women.

Because the dominant culture defines a norm and demands that those who are dominated believe it is best for them, women believe and imagine that this is the only way of life and adjust to the system as dominated, inferior, and weak. Korean women endeavor to live their lives as much as possible within the given condition. But regardless of their effort, they lose themselves in relatedness which requires the complete consumption of their lives. They yearn in vain for the lost self, the meaning of life, and the power to explore the inner self. Without knowing why they feel so depressed, lifeless, and meaningless, they question the cause.

The psychological numbness and meaninglessness of life create a sense of non-being which also means the death of the true self. This psychological condition cuts off autonomy and self understanding which results in the lack of power of imagination--the formative symbolic power.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, one becomes disintegrated without progress and change, and experiences psychological death in the absence of imaginative power. But,

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<sup>99</sup> Robert Lifton, The Life of Self (New York: Basic, 1983), 27, 44.



underneath the feeling of helplessness, a woman also knows intuitively that she has genuine power to connect to the life force. Only when a woman feels the power of self-centering can she exist and participate in the process of creating herself and the world.

As Robert Lifton explicates in his book, The Life of Self, one needs centering to be psychologically powerful. Centering enables a person to experience a world in which the self is located. Centering is possible only after decentering, which means enough detachment from the immediate world to see the universal power or principle beyond the present situation. This allows an integration of the future aim in decision making--to alter the present situation--so that the self can experience life fully. Without decentering, a person becomes static from the inability to connect new experiences with viable inner forms. Korean women also need to detach from their present pain to see the history in which their pain is rooted, and to grasp the universal principle beyond the present immediate situation. They must envision the future with hope. From this process, Korean women can bring about changes in their lives. However, the journey from silent knowledge to connected knowledge, from *hanful* to *hanless*, from selflessness to self, is not an easy one. Because patriarchy permeates life so pervasively, as if it were the air one breathes, it is very difficult to name the cause unless people force themselves to exert tremendous effort in examining the system. The structure has a more enormous power than can be imagined. In this sense, it is naive to believe that metaphysical concepts will solve the problem.

In order for metaphysical concepts to succeed, one needs first to break the shell of patriarchy; this requires clear awareness with clear consciousness. It may require self-denial or renunciation of the old self formed by patriarchy. This calls for courage and grief, and it may provoke some feelings of anger and pain. But only after that process can one genuinely reconcile with oneself and become strong enough to embrace all human beings--building new relationships and a new world.

## CHAPTER 6

### Theoretical Analysis of Korean Women's *Han* from a Spiritual Perspective

A person weaves her or his physical, psychological, and spiritual self through interaction with society and self from the beginning of life. Unhealthiness in any of these dimensions will inhibit the wholeness of a person, influencing the maturity of the other dimensions. The most important aspect is the spiritual dimension, since a human being is a meaning seeker and maker, and spirituality is the pivotal axis on which one can lay out a life map. For Korean women, who have little power in their oppressive society outside of the spiritual dimension, spirituality has been the source of power to sustain their lives in the midst of *han*. It has provided the meaning of life, a comfort for the pain, and hope in the midst of despair.

Shamanism as Korean spirituality has played an important function in Korean women's lives by providing a safe place for Korean women to release their *han*. Thus, shamanism as spirituality and Korean women's *han* are inseparable. However, the definition of spirituality varies according to interpretation and context. Spirituality in this section encompasses a rather wide range and deals with two aspects: spirituality as an ethos and as a religious experience.

First, in this chapter, spirituality is viewed as an ethos or a world-view, the fundamental core force inherited by a group of people who share the same historical heritage. It integrates and transforms whole life experiences for both society and individuals. The underlying ethos of the Korean people is a shamanistic world-view, which has been prevalent throughout their history and still exerts its power on the spirituality of the people. The purpose of exploring this historical process is to

comprehend the Korean spiritual heritage in order to enhance Korean women's spirituality, which will help to heal Korean women's *han*. For this purpose, the historical process in the early traditional society and its interaction with other major religions in Korea, as well as the relationship between the Korean spiritual ethos and Christianity, and Korean Christian women's lives will be discussed.

Secondly, spirituality as a religious experience is reviewed in the context of Korean women's lives. Religious experience provides meaning for life, a sustaining power for life's struggles, and a new set of values which encourage an attitude toward change. Since religious experience has influenced Korean women's lives, Korean women's religious experiences are discussed from a functional perspective in relation to Korean women's pain, *han*. Also, the image of God--which is one of the most powerful symbols--is probed to understand the image of God formed by Korean spirituality, and how this image has influenced Korean spirituality. Also the critical reflection on the image of God in Christianity is discussed to examine its function in the religious life of the people, especially among Korean Christian women.

#### Shamanism as Korean Spirituality

Shamanism is a paradigmatic ethos which originates from the early history of humankind not only in Korea, but also in many areas of the world before the dominance of patriarchy. Shamanism has not developed fully as a sophisticated, institutionalized religion with a logical theology. It can be interpreted more or less as having a world-view which is wholistic, life seeking, and in harmony with nature and the universe. Nonetheless, because of the lack of a systematic theory, shamanism has been viewed as a primitive religious form from an evolutionary perspective. It also has been despised by the Korean people as something to discard, while they have espoused other religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to decide whether Confucianism is a religion or not, but it will be considered as a religion in this study since it has a continuing influence on the spiritual and ethical life of Korean people.

Shamanism has existed in Korean spirituality, without structure, because of its dynamic power. As Victor Turner advocates, once a belief system has a structure, it loses its vitality--the evolutionary life force called *elan vital*. A system, in liminal status without a structural support, allows the freedom to develop new ideas, morality, and spirituality.<sup>2</sup> But, this liminality has properties of *communitas* which are considered dangerous and anarchical by the structuring group, and which therefore must be prohibited because of its potent inner power.<sup>3</sup> Shamanism has been forced to remain in transition but has possessed a vital life energy as a religion of the powerless--the poor *minjung* and women--in a structured society. Existing in a state of *communitas* with no political power, shamanism shares a commonality with the powerless. Thus, the lack of formality found in an institutional belief system does not prohibit its existence in the society as a dynamic power.

Shamanism has been the core ethos of Korean culture, but has also interacted with other religions. Sometimes shamanism has enforced its view of the world on other religions and sometimes those religions have influenced shamanism's world-view and value system. Nonetheless, shamanism has been the foundational layer of the Korean people's collective spirituality. Thus, to understand the Korean people and Korean religions, it is necessary to understand shamanism. In this section, the shamanistic world-view is examined to determine how it has persisted in the process of acculturation and reciprocal interaction as the spiritual core of the Korean people.

#### Shamanism in the Early Period

Even though there is much archaeological evidence dating from the Paleolithic Age of existence on the Korean peninsula, the religious life of the early people is not clear. There are differences among scholars as to whether an early religious form in Korea was

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<sup>2</sup> Turner, 128.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 109.

the origin of shamanism.<sup>4</sup> However, many researchers by studying archaeological findings, myth, and ritual which provide some insights into the religious life of early Korean people suggest that shamanism was the religion of this early society .

Creation mythology reveals the world-view of shamanism which was already germinating in this early period. The function of myth is to rebind people to the sacred world. The earliest and most fundamental form of creation mythology in Korean tribal monarchies is the creation myth of *Kochoson*, found in the Samguk Yusa, which reveals the paradigmatic structure of a people's world-view.<sup>5</sup> The structure of the *Kochoson* myth in *Hwandan-kogi* reveals the belief in: (1) a God who descended from the sky; (2) a fertile Mother or Earth Goddess; and (3) the creation of divine human beings from the union of the Sky God and Earth Goddess. In the *Kochosun* period, there were pastoral hunters who immigrated from the north and believed in a patriarchal male god of the sky which descended to a cosmic tree on a cosmic mountain. This belief in the hierophany of a high mountain and mystic tree still flourishes among many people who practice shamanism, as well as in the folk culture tradition. Also, the aboriginal residents in the area were

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<sup>4</sup> Inhoe Kim, "Korean Shamanism: A Bibliographical Introduction," Shamanism: The Spirit World of Korea, 12.

Chai-ho Sin and Tong Ch'oe assert that the indigenous religion goes back to Sodo which had a highly religious and militaristic culture. Nam-sun Choi suggests that the origin of Korean religion is Bulu. Nung-wha Yi asserts that the ancient religion of God or gods is the precursor of Korean shamanism. See Inhoe Kim ed., A Study on Korean Shamanism (Seoul: Koryo University Press, 1982), 3-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ilyon[Buddhist monk, A.D 1206-87] , Samguk Yusa, translated from Chinese to Korean by Don Whan Lee (Seoul: Samjung Dang, 1983). The book includes creation myths and myths about gods and goddesses which unfold the structure of a belief system not only in Kochoson but also in the later period of the Three Kingdoms. His writing was based on the early historical writing called *Kogi* (old writing) which is now extinct. Fortunately, one *Kogi* was found (called *Hwandan-kogi* ) which is the history of the *Hwandan* period, and is believed to be one of the oldest writings of human history. Thus, formal study can go back to the early period of the Three Kingdoms. Moreover, the recorded text refers to earlier chronicles from which the religion of the Kochoson period can be constructed.

agricultural and the revolution in agricultural techniques facilitated belief in the Mother Earth Fertility Goddess.<sup>6</sup>

As Mircea Eliade relates, the Sky God gradually withdraws from the important role in cosmogony, as happened in other Central and North Asia countries.<sup>7</sup> *Hanunim*, which originally means sky God, engenders the advance of a further abstract, philosophical concept.<sup>8</sup> The distinctive philosophical concept of Han in *Hanunim* lies in its non-orientability and absence of boundary, which is not yet completely achieved in the philosophical thoughts of such beliefs as Buddhism or Confucianism, but is believed to overcome dualism.<sup>9</sup>

Han has different meanings and functions in the Korean language. Han is one, but it also includes many. For example, the word Han means both *nat* (part, ㉵) and *on* (whole, ㉶). Part is whole and whole is part. Thus, "One as One and One as Many are identical."<sup>10</sup> Han has a transforming power when it interacts with other thoughts: a transforming power in the philosophical concept of the nondualist view, and the power of inclusiveness in its philosophy of non-orientability.

Han indicates the ultimate reality. It transcends the world, but also is immanent in the world. There is no distinctive separateness in the universe or in any existence in the world. Everything is interrelated. *Hanunim* is Han plus *nim* which is the suffix for respect--that is, *Hanunim* is Han-God. Therefore, the fundamental concept of God and the world of the Korean people is nonseparative, and nondualistic. God and human beings,

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<sup>6</sup> Tong Shik Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 31.

<sup>7</sup> Mircea Eliade, Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 199.

<sup>8</sup> See Sang Il Kim, "What is Hanism?", 10-19 for the root of the word Han.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 21. Refer to chap. 5 for a discussion of Han.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 24.

people and people, human beings and nature, are all connected ontologically. God is immanent in every existence, but is still a transcendent being--the ultimate reality. Both the concept of Han and the fundamental structure of creation mythology reveal the core world-view of the Korean mind and personality which develop from that world-view. Their value and authenticity are grounded in inclusiveness, wholeness, conflict-avoidance, and non-dualism. Thus, Han is an important part of the Korean ethos, while *han* is another emotional aspect of the ethos. Han represents complete oneness and harmonious relatedness, and *han* is manifested when Han is broken. But the male gender of *Hanunim*, which connotes the Sky God, disappears as this concept develops an abstract meaning.

Therefore, in shamanism a human being is the creation of the union of Father Sky God and Mother Earth God. There is no negation of Mother Goddess in the Korean fundamental concept of God. There is no conflict, only harmony, in these relationships: Father God and Mother God, God and human being, and human beings and the rest of creation. Human beings in the Korean world-view are as divine as God. They are participants in the process of God's creation, and are as important as gods or goddesses. This openness toward the divine world and the connectedness to the spiritual world are distinctive characteristics of the Korean people.

Because of the lack of written documents, research cannot conclude definitively that the religious form in early Korean history was shamanism. Nonetheless, the documents written later in the Three Kingdom period which describe various religious activities suggest a strong possibility that the existing religious form was similar to that of shamanism.<sup>11</sup> These descriptions of the rituals in various documents reveals both the inner structure of shamanism and the people's collective religious experience of ecstasy as an

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<sup>11</sup> These links can be found in: Koguryo (37 B.C.-A.D. 668), including northern Manchuria; Paekche (18 B.C. - A.D. 660) in the Han river area; and Silla (57 B.C.-A.D. 935) in the Southeastern part along the Nakdong river. The Three Kingdoms had their own recorded history from A.D. 75 in Paekche, and A.D. 545 in Silla. Most of the Three Kingdoms written chronicles have not survived except Samguk Sagi by Bushik Kim, but Samguk Sagi mentions the existence of historical recordings such as Hwarang Segi, Son Sa, Tan'gun Ki, and Sin'gi Pisa which indicate a religion which may have been shamanism.

orgiastic state.<sup>12</sup> In the Koryŏ period, shamanistic rituals were held in Sodo.<sup>13</sup> In the Koryŏ period the King held nationwide shaman rituals, and two of those communal rituals still exist today.<sup>14</sup> The prominent scholar, Kyu Bo Yi, writes a poem on "Old Shaman" in his book, Tongguk Yisanggukgip, which describes in detail the shaman life of an old woman including the ritual process, description of the shrine, and the shaman's behavior, which are very similar to the rituals of today.<sup>15</sup>

As Eliade explicates, the ecstasy in a shaman ritual is experiencing union with God which is energy for new creation, a new life. As in myth, through ritual a person can orient her or his life in God, create new harmony with God and others, and also find a divine meaning in life. Hence, shamanism's paradigmatic view of the world--the connectedness with every existence including god and goddess--has been strongly rooted in Korean spirituality as an ethos, and the rituals have transmitted its essential structure without many changes.

The relationship between shamanism and women is another authentic dimension of Korean shamanism. In the early period there were many prominent female shamans in Korea, even though political power was in male hands.<sup>16</sup> Actually, the male shaman might be a later development of patriarchal society, since the Mother Earth Fertility Goddess existed from the very early history of the Korean people. The evidence of female

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<sup>12</sup> Inhoe Kim, "Korean Shamanism: A Bibliographical Studies," A Study on Korean Shamanism, ed. Inhoe Kim, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Ki-baik Lee, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Tong Shik Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 130- 41.

<sup>15</sup> Kyu Bo Yi, "Old Shaman," Tongguk Yisanggukgip, vol.2 (Seoul: Tongguk Publ., 1958).

<sup>16</sup> Yung-Chung Kim, 14.



figurines,<sup>17</sup> the continuation of housewives' religious activity,<sup>18</sup> and the evidence of a dominant number of female shamans strongly support the argument.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that there might have been a large number of male shamans when shamans could have political power but, when politics and religion were separated, women took the main shaman role in Korean society.<sup>20</sup> Thus, even though shamanism cannot be claimed solely as the domain of women, there is much evidences= which indicates the dominance of women's spirituality and their role in early society as religious leaders. So it can be assumed that Korean women were more powerful in the spiritual dimension or more receptive to spiritual power. Moreover, the goddess was not demeaned in early Korean history, for both men and women shared equal status.

From archaeological findings, myth, and ritual, the religious belief system in early Korean society can be constructed. Studies reveal that the ethos of the Korean people in this early period had a shamanistic world-view and spirituality. Mother Earth Goddess was important and closely related to people's lives. The spirituality was gender free with a rather strong emphasis on wholeness, oneness, and harmonious relatedness as shown in the concept of Han. People celebrated union with God through singing, dancing, and

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<sup>17</sup> Only one clay figurine of a female has been found, but there are several figurines made of bone which require further study to determine whether these are female. However, no male figurines made of clay have been found. Nonetheless, considering the progress and the settlement of the patriarchal social and political structure on the Korean peninsula in the tribal monarch period, a female figurine is a significant finding for further study regarding the existence of a fertility goddess religion in that period and the earlier period. See Ki-baik Lee, 50. Refer also to Adrienne Rich, "Prepatriarchal Female/Goddess Images," in The Politics of Women's Spirituality, ed. Charlene Spretnak (New York: Anchor, 1982), 35; and Gimbutas, 63 for the relationship between female figurines and mother goddess religion.

<sup>18</sup> See Laurel Kendall, Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits: Women in Korean Ritual Life (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985)

<sup>19</sup> Alan Carter Covell, Ecstasy: Shamanism in Korea (Seoul: Hollym International, 1983), 10. This study shows that more than 9 percent of the practicing shamans of the ecstatic tradition in Korea today are females.

<sup>20</sup> On Cheju Island the number of male shamans are equal to that of female which is quite opposite from the situation of the mainland. It can be assumed that there is a strong relationship between political power and spiritual power, since women have more power on Cheju Island than on the mainland.

drinking, and the ecstasy extended to the community.<sup>21</sup> This ethos continued to exert its power as a core structure in later periods of history.

#### From Three Kingdoms to the Koryo Period

Since the beginning of its history, Korea has been subject to constant threats and invasions from China and Japan. But the primary external cultural influence has been from China. Buddhism were introduced through China and has had a great impact upon the Korean mind. Buddhism was not as easily accepted as other beliefs because it denies the family system, which is one of the most important Korean values.<sup>22</sup> However, all of the Three Kingdoms supported Buddhism, since it provided a ruling ideology. To have one *Dharma* (Divine Law) for everyone, binded both king and people which helped the country to be united.<sup>23</sup> While *Dharma* provided the supporting ideology for the King, *samsara* helped aristocrats to ensure their right to rule over the people.<sup>24</sup> Thus, Buddhism functioned as an ideology for ruling groups.<sup>25</sup>

Confucianism was introduced in Korea earlier than Buddhism, but did not flourish until the Yi Dynasty. Nonetheless, both religions were Koreanized, philosophically and spiritually. The philosophical concepts of both Confucianism and Buddhism advanced to a

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<sup>21</sup> Tong Shik Ryu develops his theory of Korean shamanism by categorizing rituals into three different forms: the communal ritual which is male centered and has the *yang* quality; the individual ritual which is female centered and has the *yin* quality; and syncretism such as Donghak from the union of *yang* and *yin*. See Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 60.

<sup>22</sup> Buddhism was introduced to Koguryo in A.D. 372, to Paekche in A.D. 384, and to Silla in A.D. 528.

<sup>23</sup> Ki-baik Lee, 77. *Dharma* means the divine rule for structuring the world, which provides a divine authority for the class structure of the society. Therefore, it is a divine decree to have rulers and the ruled in Hinduism. But in Buddhism the emphasis is on the equality of people, and whoever wishes can return to *Dharma*, one Divine Law.

<sup>24</sup> *Samsara* means that the life in this world is determined by the quality of life in a previous one. Therefore, the situation of one's present life is the result of one's previous life, and the responsibility for the condition of present life falls upon oneself.

<sup>25</sup> Inhoe Kim, The Study on Korean Shamanism (Seoul: Jipmundang, 1988), 165-67.

highly sophisticated form from the influence of the Korean concept of Han, and the rituals practiced in these religions have been transformed for the purpose of Korean shamanistic needs. However, neither Confucianism nor Buddhism adequately met the needs of the Korean people's spirituality, and Taoism began to flourish since it provided some mystical experiences similar to that of shamanism. Again, shamanism readily assimilated Taoism.

One of the outstanding efforts in the Kingdom of Silla was to realize the creative integration of the Korean shamanistic world-view in *Hwarangdo*, which played an important role in the unification of the Three Kingdoms by Silla. *Hwarangdo* was a way of educating young people by developing disciplines from three religions--Buddhism, Confucianism, and shamanism. In particular, the Buddhism expressed in Amita Buddha's ideal of the divine country, which enforces the Korean shamanistic view of their land as sacred, helped the people to protect their land and further served to unify the Three Kingdoms.<sup>26</sup> In addition to these religions, there was also the influence of Taoism.<sup>27</sup>

*Hwarangdo* was one of the culminations of the Korean shamanistic character which includes tolerance, inclusiveness, and creativity. Nonetheless, *Hwarangdo* did not originate in Silla. It was not a innovative system, but rather a continuation of an existing system. However, the previous system was obviously based on a women's group, and the text in the Samguk Sagi shows the change to a men's group.<sup>28</sup> It is not obvious what the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 93-94.

<sup>27</sup> Chai-Shin Yu, "Korean Taoism and Shamanism," Shamanism: The Spirit World of Korea, 98-105. See also Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 93.

<sup>28</sup> Cited in Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 83-84. In the year of King Chinheung 37 (A.D. 576), *Wonwha* (the old name of *Hwarang*) were selected and respected. Due to the need for outstanding leaders of the country, the cabinet members selected two beautiful young women to head them who they called *Namwha* and *Chunjung*. They had more than two hundred members under them, but the two women fought each other out of jealousy. *Chunjung* one day poisoned *Namwha*, and was sentenced to death. So the group scattered. Then the government selected beautiful young men, dressed them like women, and called them *Hwarang*. These young men got together, studied the right ways, and learned singing and dancing in the mountains. Among these young men, the government selected the proper persons to be hired as leaders in the government.

real factors for change were. The text shows contempt toward women, describing the cause of the abrupt discontinuity of the group as women's jealousy and violence against each other. But the document reveals that, even after establishing a male system, they continuously tried to imitate women. Even though it may be explained as the realization of "coincidentia oppositorum,"<sup>29</sup> the male system seems to be an imitation of women's superiority as shown in other society's rituals of men imitating women's power in early history. Since the ideology of their system was rooted in shamanism's realization of the union of human beings and the divine, women or femininity were considered a core factor.

The assumption can be made that women were regarded as central figures in spirituality, as well as in the political arena. They were the mediators of divine power, and divine power was considered the most important power in human affairs because the world is God's divine place according to the shamanistic world-view in early society.<sup>30</sup> While other religious systems were employed as ethical teachings, it is obvious that the underlying ethos was the Korean, archaic, shamanistic spirituality in *Hwarangdo*. Considering the importance of *Hwarangdo* in Silla, the general attitude toward women can be pictured again as respectful, not negating, due to their importance in the social, political, and spiritual domains.

*Hwarangdo*'s ideology focused on life on this earth, the harmony within the universe, and the realization of the orderliness within society, so that the three domains (sky, earth, and humanity) could be in balance and harmony. The concept of human beings in this ideology is that human beings have the responsibility to enlighten the world. A person is neither an autonomous, separate being from the world, nor does he or she have

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>30</sup> See Ki-baik Lee, 107. Buddhism was also feminized in Korea, and the ascetic expressions in Buddhist art are famous for the portrayal of femininity in all Buddha figures.

a right to govern the world with a superior power.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the creation or destruction of the universe depends on human responsibility, and the world is the place where human beings can realize this ultimate purpose of life and fulfill their responsibility.<sup>32</sup>

To accomplish this purpose, a person not only seeks goodness in oneself, but has to promote good in others. Thus, human activity in the Korean shamanistic mind is understood to prevent disasters and bring about the happiness of humankind. But happiness is not an individualistic entity one can own. It comes from the process of promoting good in others and society, as well as in oneself, which is the process of participating in the creation of the Universe. Hence, shamanism's world-view in *Hwarangdo* is the people's yearning for union of the divine and the self, the absence of boundaries between female and male or political and spiritual, their collective sharing and responsibility as one human community, and their ultimate happiness in the culmination of all these.<sup>33</sup>

The governing ideology in unified Silla after the period of the Three Kingdoms was Buddhism. Buddhism not only gained in political power, but also made great advances through the effort of Wonhyo (A.D. 617-686), a Buddhist monk. He integrated shamanism and Buddhism, not only in a metaphysical concept by establishing his theory of *hwajung* (harmonization of all disputes), but also in his life.<sup>34</sup> According to him, there are no distinctions between this world and other worlds, truth or nontruth, knowledge or

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<sup>31</sup> Inhoe Kim, *The Study on Korean Shamanism*, 126.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>33</sup> Without understanding what happiness means in the Korean mind, the search for happiness in the Korean people's religious life has been viewed with contempt by many elite groups whose concept of happiness is more distinctly separated into two dimensions--worldly and transcendental--as expressed in Western theology. Also, most people do not grasp the true collective meaning of happiness.

<sup>34</sup> Wonhyo, a prominent Buddhist monk, was believed to be one of the *Hwarang*. He had a shaman's rebirth initiation experience, and also enlightened this experience with ascetic training. He evangelized his integrated Buddhist truth while singing and dancing in the village, among the people, like a shaman.

ignorance, and separateness only exists in one's mind. Wonhyo tried to overcome any separateness, even secular and sacred, to attain oneness. He developed an authentic Buddhist school founded on the Korean shamanistic ethos of avoidance of conflict and separatism.<sup>35</sup> By integrating different Buddhist schools of thought into a harmonious one, he moved the two most important schools from oppositional positions to the middle path.<sup>36</sup> He also emphasized the importance of the faith in a Bodhisattva ideal. While advancing the philosophical concepts as a prolific scholar, he tried to help the common people by providing hope through faith alone. In this belief system, one can go to *So'bang Chungto* (Westland, paradise in Buddhism) if one recites one sentence about one's belief in Amida's generous unconditional salvation. Wonhyo's interpretation of Buddhism, which is deeply connected with shamanism, provided a concrete hope for the oppressed group who had no access to social change, except the anticipation of external intervention by divine power or future life in *So'bang Chungto* which promises happiness. As a result of this view, in spite of its negation of a worldly life and the family system, shamanized Buddhism flourished. However, it perpetuated fatalism and escapism while supplying a practical reason to believe--salvation through faith without works.

The Buddhism which was the national religion in the Koryo Dynasty (A.D. 936-1392) was again shamanized Buddhism. Early Korean society viewed not only specifically sanctified places, but also residential areas as part of the sacred world.<sup>37</sup> The weakened Koryo dynasty built pagodas and temples and encouraged the printing of a sacred text (*Tripitaka*) on wooden plates to protect their country from Mongol invasion by depending

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<sup>35</sup> Ki-baik Lee, 101.

<sup>36</sup> Kang Nam Oh, "Hanism as Catalyst for Religious Pluralism," *Hanism as Korean Mind*, eds. Sang Il Kim and Young Chan Ro, 85.

<sup>37</sup> Inhoe Kim, *The Study on Korean Shamanism*, 135.

upon a Superior power.<sup>38</sup> They relied on Buddha's supernatural power and invoked the people's consciousness of the divine place of their country. As a result, not only at the national level was shamanized Buddhism practiced, but individual shamanism was practiced in Buddhist temples, and Buddhist rituals such as *Palgwanhoe* and *Yundeung* were shamanized.<sup>39</sup> In addition, Buddhist temples usually had a shrine for a Shaman god or goddess.<sup>40</sup>

The rebellion by the minjung, the reign by military power, the continuous threat from north and south, and the fall of the ruling group by military power were all factors in weakening the Koryo Dynasty.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, shamanized Buddhism, the national religion, became corrupted due to its political power and made people too dependent on the supernatural power of shamanism. Shamanism became the tool for satisfying individuals' needs and desires. The religion, with a strong political power base, could not avoid playing the role of a healthy belief system. As a result, a new elite group arose to lead the country and took Confucianism as a new ideology.

#### Traditional and New Religious Ideologies in the Yi Period

Confucianism was introduced in the Korean peninsula during the early Kochosun period, started to spread in the later Koryo Dynasty, and became the state ideology for the Yi Dynasty. During this time Buddhism, as well as shamanism, was strongly denounced by the ruling group.<sup>42</sup> However, even without political power, Buddhism and shamanism

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<sup>38</sup> Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990), 92.

<sup>39</sup> See Ki-baik Lee, 161-62; and Ryu, *Traditional Religion and Korean Culture* (Seoul: Hyundai Sasangsa, 1978), 139-83. Ryu studies the acculturation process of Buddhism in Korean culture and discusses the extent that Buddhist rituals and the God's shrine in Buddhist temples have been acculturated.

<sup>40</sup> Ryu, *Structure and History of Korean Shamanism*, 260.

<sup>41</sup> Ki-baik Lee, 175, 181, 183, 193.

<sup>42</sup> Young Chung Kim, 129.

were practiced continuously and the number of shamans increased and there was a chief women shaman in every town.<sup>43</sup>

Women's role in the Yi dynasty were not limited to the household, as is evident by the number of women shamans and healers. Shamans took care of the ordinary people and protected them from troubling spirits by playing a mediator role, while blessing them with happiness in the face of crises; and there were women healers who healed women patients.<sup>44</sup> Even at the national level, which oppressed shamanism, there were government appointed shamans who had great power and presided over shamanistic rituals in the case of political crisis or natural calamity. They invoked the god to send rain, and advised kings in decisions of national importance. In *Yijo Sillok* there are several hundred recorded cases of rain praying, and in *So'ktaejon* there were government offices called *Tongso hwalbinso* which provided medical services for the commoners and the poor in the capital. Later shaman healers held these offices.<sup>45</sup> Ironically the government, which rejected shamanism and persecuted it so severely, depended upon shaman power which came mostly from women shamans and women healers. Without official recognition, shamanism played a critical role in people's daily life by providing care and healing, and women shamans had indirect political power as well by advising the kings.

Confucianism was not only extremely oppressive to women but it also created factionalism, even among the elite groups. Those elite who could not participate in the power structure turned their intellectual interest from abstract ethical concepts to practical

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 130, 134. Women shaman healers were employed to treat women of high class, since men and women were not supposed to have the physical contact which is necessary in oriental medicine to diagnose illnesses. But in early prehistoric societies other than Korea, women were the powerful healers who practiced a holistic approach. See Chellis Glendinning, "The Healing Powers of Women," *The Politics of Women's Spirituality*, ed. Charlene Spretnak, 281, 285.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 131.



knowledge (*Silhak*, seventeenth century).<sup>46</sup> People in *Silhak* school were creative, innovative, provocative, and very pragmatic. They refused to blindly obey the old teaching and did not hesitate to accept new knowledge. The knowledge gained from studying the translated Chinese Bible, which denied any discrimination among people and suggested a new kingdom of social equals, was a fresh stimulant. But the challenge against the fundamental power structure of society and the rejection of traditional values brought severe oppression of the Catholic church from the Korean government. In particular, ancestor worship is still disputed as to whether it is a traditional custom or reverence for other gods among church members.

The government was not only challenged by this new elite group (urban, middle-class dwellers), but also by farmers in the countryside. The new movement among farmers was called *Tonghak*, which adopted and integrated various thoughts from Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shamanism, and some Catholic ideas.<sup>47</sup> However, the fundamental integrating power was rooted in the Korean people's archaic shamanistic world-view. The theological doctrine of *Tonghak* (study of the East) emancipated oppressed people by giving them a new vision and triggered repressed dynamic energy into the revolution of 1894, which transformed feudal Korean society into the beginning of a modern democracy.

The fundamental divine view of *Tonghak*, as in shamanism, was to understand God as the ultimate reality, immanent in this world. Human beings are the "manifestation of God which is the immanent totality of all things."<sup>48</sup> A human being originates from God who is "a constantly self-evolving being, the Totality of Life found in individual

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<sup>46</sup> Ki-baik Lee, 277-80.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 309-10, 336-42.

<sup>48</sup> Yong Choon Kim, *The Ch'ondogyo Concept of Man* (Seoul: Pan Korean Book Corp. , 1978), 15.

lives."<sup>49</sup> God as ultimate power, and as transcendental and immanent, contains both the spirit and the matter of the world in its totality.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the first doctrine is *innaech'on* (human being is God), which means a human being is "the very manifestation of the essence of God."<sup>51</sup> There is no dualistic view between a human being and God, which is a shamanistic Han concept (one is many and many is one). The advancement or development in *Tonghak* theology is the harmonious relationship between individuality and totality, living in accordance with truth, the natural way.<sup>52</sup> The view of the human being as a creation of God is fundamentally optimistic.

The human being is born good since God is good, and evil does not exist as a real entity, but "it is simply a relative function for the development toward the good direction."<sup>53</sup> There is no absolute right or wrong, but the rise and fall of good and evil is like any natural phenomena, which does not last forever. Evil is a weakness like a disease; it is caused from not knowing the flow of truth, and comes from internal and external defects. Therefore, the cure for the disease is the improvement of human being--the recreation of humanity.<sup>54</sup>

*Tonghak* doctrine was built upon a shamanistic world-view. Therefore, the Heavenly Way starts from relationships with other human beings, extending its relatedness to the nexus of every existence. Reverence for other human beings became the golden rule of *Tonghak*, and it advocated changes in the treatment of children, women, and the lower

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted from Se Myung Paek, *Tonghak Sasangkwa Ch'ondogyo Tonghak* [The Philosophy of Tonghak and Tonghak Ch'ondogyo] (Seoul: Tonghaksa, 1956), 45, as cited in Young Choon Kim.

<sup>50</sup> Yong Choon Kim, 21.

<sup>51</sup> Se Myung Paek, *The Philosophy of Tonghak and Tonghak Ch'ondogyo*, 53.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 36. See also Se Myung Paek, *Tonghak Kyongjon Haewi* [An Interpretation of Tonghak Scriptures] (Seoul: Hankook Sasang Yunkuhoe, 1963), 80.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 65.

classes. Even though the status of women and children was elevated to that of men in the early period of the movement, *Tonghak* teaching still affirmed the traditional ethic between men and women.<sup>55</sup>

Another authentic view of this religious movement, which was rooted in shamanism, involved nature and the physical world. It asked people to treat all lifeless physical existences and living creatures with respect as the principle of the universe. It respected the natural world which sustains human life. The people were taught to kill animals only for survival. With appreciation of its beauty and virtue, it asked people to nurture and protect nature with love and care since mother nature nurtures human beings. The movement recognized human rights as well as responsibilities. It taught that through loving and respecting animals and vegetables, the moral and spiritual virtue in human nature and life would be enlarged, and genuine progress and harmony would exist in human life.<sup>56</sup>

As in shamanism, salvation or spirituality, was not just personal but communal, seeking the improvement of all of humanity in *Tonghak*. It advocated the need for spiritual training for the re-creation of humanity. To achieve God's world in this world, one was expected to treat another human being as God since God is immanent in persons. Also, the movement had a deep concern for the nation's fate since people's lives are intrinsically related to their divine world from a shamanistic world-view. This view of the movement led people to believe that the conscience of one united people, inheriting the same culture within God's divine world, would strengthen the people as a nation.

In summary, the *Tonghak* movement originated from the Korean shamanistic world-view, its power of integration and dynamic energy for transformation. It challenged

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 66. See also Se Myung Paek, *Philosophy of New Man* (Seoul: Ilsinsa, 1963), 109; and Hyun Sook Lee, "A Study on the View of Korean Women in Tonghak Poems." Master's thesis, Ewha Women's University [Seoul], 1984.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 84.

the existing social structure, which threatened oppressors. The corruption-weakened government asked for help from China and Japan to defend itself against the *Tonghak* rebellion, which provided an excuse for Japan to invade Korea, and the long colonization of Korea started. Only after Japanese colonization was the study of Shamanism began by Japanese scholars, with the intention of disintegrating the Korean people by studying the Korean ethos.<sup>57</sup>

### Christianity in the Modern Period

The first introduction of Christianity in Korea was Roman Catholicism in 1784. The first one hundred years of Catholic church history in Korea is the history of martyrs' blood because of the Catholic's persistent rejection of ancestor worship. Unlike the Catholic missionaries in China and Japan who tried to understand and assimilate the culture within Catholicism, the missionaries in Korea strongly insisted on obedience to only one God and assumed a rigid interpretation of ancestor worship as the worship of pagan gods.<sup>58</sup>

In 1884, after 100 years of severe persecution of the Catholic church, Protestantism was introduced to the Korea peninsula, which was in turmoil after 500 years of rule by the Yi Dynasty. The overemphasis on the patriarchal Confucian values by the ruling class, the change in foreign power dynamics, and the military growth and expansionism of Japan caused extreme confusion and the fall of the Yi Dynasty.

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<sup>57</sup> Inhoe Kim, The Study on Korean Shamanism, 12-13.

<sup>58</sup> See Kyung Bae Min, Korean Church History (Seoul: Korean Christianity Publ., 1972), chaps. 1 and 2.

In China, the Jesuit Matteo Ricci began the implantation of Catholicism with a very positive attitude toward Chinese culture. But the conflict among other mission groups (such as Franciscans and Dominicans) caused the Pope to order the missionary to be exclusive toward Chinese culture, which provoked a rites controversy. In Korea, Catholicism took this position and demanded that Korean Catholics reject ancestor worship, which prompted severe persecution from the government. See Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Nineteenth Century Outside Europe: The Americas, the Pacific, Asia, and Africa (New York: Harper & Bros., 1961).

In the midst of this confusion, the first Protestant missionary effort was not direct evangelization, but a concentration on education and healing.<sup>59</sup> Protestantism built its foundation rather easily because of its indirect approach to methodology and the similarity between the biblical world and Korean customs.<sup>60</sup> Also the political oppression, which brought forth the identification of Korea's yearning for freedom from Japanese rule, was compared to the oppression of the Israelites and their yearning for freedom; and the number of Christians increased during Japanese rule.<sup>61</sup> Missionaries were respected as the bearers not only of the hope of freedom, but as the power of Western civilization which could contribute to the Korean sociological condition.<sup>62</sup> Actually, the missionaries introduced not only Protestant Christianity but also new values and methods in education and medical treatment.<sup>63</sup> They virtually inducted Western culture into Korea, which had been tightly closed against external influences after its previously painful experiences with Japan and China.

The equality of human beings, the liberation from oppressors, and the prospect of a new kingdom in another world were the stimulating ideas fresh enough to attract people to Christianity who were oppressed and without a new value system in a chaotic society.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Kwangsun Suh, Hankook Kidokkyoeui Sai'insik, [A New Understanding of Korean Christianity] (Seoul: Korea Christianity Publ., 1985), 17-23.

<sup>60</sup> There are many similarities between the biblical world and Korean traditions: *an'nyung*, the greeting and departing word, which has a meaning similar to shalom; ceremonial bowing; the wearing of ash as repentance; the existence of many gods; and the mat and bed-rolling custom. Also the concept of one God, Yahweh, and *Hanunim*, helped the Korean people to accept Yahweh without much resistance. See Scott Robertson, "Warring Mentalities in the Far East," Journal of Asia [Seoul]20 (1920): 699.

<sup>61</sup> L. George Paik, History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910 (1927; reprint, New York: Paragon, 1971), 83.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>63</sup> Kwangsun Suh, A New Understanding of Korean Christianity, 17-23.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 98. This study shows that 98.3% of ministers and 91.5% of lay people believe in the life after death, a new kingdom of God, and that 98.3% of ministers and 94.8% of lay people believe literally in the second coming of Jesus.

the missionaries' genuine zeal in caring for the poor and alienated groups, and their endeavors to educate the most uneducated and oppressed groups (their strategy was to target housewives and female children) opened new possibilities of liberation, especially for Korean women.<sup>65</sup>

Protestantism was closely related to politics from the beginning of its history in Korea, and helped many people to be conscientized about their national situations. But Protestantism later tried to separate itself from politics in order not to lose the opportunity to evangelize Korea under Japanese colonialism, thus leading to a focus on the spiritual dimension. Protestantism did not promote Korea's resistance to Japan, even though at the beginning the Korean people believed and saw in Christianity the hope for freedom from their captors.<sup>66</sup> As a result, in spite of the remarkable increase in the number of Christians after the great revival of 1907,<sup>67</sup> Korean Christianity has become emotional, supernatural and other worldly, with a high emphasis on receiving the Holy Spirit, but with little social concern.<sup>68</sup> The Korean characteristics of familial individualism and the shamanistic world-view were reinforced by the emphasis on individual spirituality.<sup>69</sup> Further, the Nevius plan for mission in Korea helped the Korean churches to be self-supporting and independent of American missionaries, but unfortunately it produced denominational

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<sup>65</sup> Charles Allen Clark, The Nevius Plan for Mission Work (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1937), 44.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 32-39.

<sup>67</sup> See Min, 206-12, for more detailed information about the 1907 revival.

<sup>68</sup> Chang Sik Lee, "Rethinking Some Aspects of Devotional Life," Korea Struggles for Christ, eds., Harold S. Hong, Won Yong Ji, and Chung Choon Kim (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1966), 171-72.

<sup>69</sup> Kwangsun Suh, A New Understanding of Korean Christianity, 110. The attitude of Korean Christians toward other religions including shamanism is very antagonistic. According to Suh's study, 70.9% of ministers and 62.6% of lay people answered that Christianity is the only "Truth." In contradiction to their exclusive attitude, 20.1% of ministers and 25.7% of lay people answered that there is some truth in fortunetelling and traditional belief systems which foretell one's fate.

separatism.<sup>70</sup> The denominations which sent missionaries to Korea divided the country into several mission districts,<sup>71</sup> and the plan left deep scars on Korean Christianity which still remain today.<sup>72</sup>

Korean Protestant Christianity is inherited basically from the conservative, fundamental theology of American missionaries.<sup>73</sup> The ethnocentric attitude of missionaries not only prevented further theological advancement, but also established a low quality of pastors for the Christian community as well as for Korean Christianity itself.<sup>74</sup> Emphasis on biblical inerrancy and absolute obedience to church and priesthood were demanded, views which were not unfamiliar in an authoritarian, patriarchal society. Any disagreement with this direction was criticized without mercy. Chun Bae Kim's effort to provide some room for interpretation of the Bible in relation to women's status, was rejected with the threat of expulsion from the church.<sup>75</sup> Inevitably, biblical authoritarianism prevents critical theological reflection needed for developing indigenous theology.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 30. See also Charles Allen Clark, 44.

The Nevius method was accepted among the Korean missionaries after Dr. Nevius visited Seoul in 1890. The instructions are: (1) To focus on personal evangelism and adopt the itinerary system. (2) To place the Bible as central in every part of their work. (3) To organize self-help groups which would consist of unpaid lay members. (4) To guide these groups under the paid circuit leaders. (5) To let each group be self-supporting in paying salaries for the circuit leaders who later would become pastors of the groups. Also no pastor of a single church could be provided for with foreign funds. (6) To focus on systematic Bible study. (7) To enforce strict discipline according to biblical penalties. (8) To encourage cooperation and union with other bodies, at least within territorial divisions. (9) Not to become involved in lawsuits or any such matters. (10) To provide general assistance in the economic life of the people.

<sup>71</sup> L. George Paik, 56.

<sup>72</sup> Kwangsun Suh, *A New Understanding of Korean Christianity*, 51-52.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 97. The percentage of the ministers who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible is 84.9%, and that of lay people is 92.3%.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 27-29. Missionaries set the standard of education for Korean pastors as less than for themselves, and a little more than for the common folks. In addition, missionaries viewed knowledge of areas other than the Bible as useless and profane.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 34, 71. Chun Bae Kim wrote an article about women's status in the Bible arguing that the Bible should not be interpreted literally. His view inevitably confronted the belief of the majority of Korean Christians in the inerrancy of the Bible. This incident precipitated the call for a more rigid

Christianity opened new realms for oppressed Korean women. While men turned to Christianity as a liberating ideology from Japanese colonization, Korean women saw it as a liberating ideology not only from another country, but as freedom from their multiple oppressions. The missionaries' emphasis on education for women produced educated and conscientized women leaders. Women who were conscientized organized several groups to fight the Japanese, and their activities covered various dimensions of women's lives and their country's struggle for independence.<sup>76</sup>

In spite of the early contribution to Korean women, Christianity's emphasis on receiving the Holy Spirit prevented women from seeing the reality from a sociological perspective. Piety--which is well integrated within the patriarchal ideology of Korean culture--and absolute obedience to biblical teachings and the church bind Korean women with symbolic divine power and patriarchal ideology. The description of the Korean congregational members who repented during the 1907 revival meeting illustrates graphically the situation of Korean church women. This picture is similar in Korean churches today. Instead of raising an awareness of the severe oppression of the society against women, Christianity tells women to repent of their sins.<sup>77</sup> Actually the missionary

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application of biblical inerrancy in Korean churches, and churches are still reluctant to accept the liberal interpretations of the Bible.

<sup>76</sup> Yong Oak Park, Hankook Kundae Yo'sung Wundongsa Yunku [The Study on Korean Women's Movement in Early Modernization Period] (Seoul: Hankook Jungsunmunwha Yunkuwon Publ., 1984), 171-91. In Park's book the women's movement, including Christians, is examined.

<sup>77</sup> Evil is not disobedience to God, but is a state of being inhuman according to the Korean world-view. Being human means for Koreans to be in good relationships. Therefore, in the researcher's interpretation, sin for the Korean mind is the brokenness of relatedness with other human beings and other existences which forces persons out of harmony with the universe. Thus, sin is understood by Korean people in relation to certain behavior rather than as disobedience to God (as in original sin), and this view forces women to repent their "inappropriate behavior" according to the morality of patriarchy. Also, the word *choe* (sin) connotes only the behavioral meaning of sin.

See A. Sung Park for a comparative understanding of *han* and sin from the perspective of minjung and process theologies. Refer also to Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1964). See Judith Plaskow, Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980) for a criticism of



policy toward Korean women was to preserve the tradition and Confucian ethics. For example, H. G. Underwood emphasized her goal in educating Korean women as teaching them to be more useful, practical Christians who respected the culture and ethic.<sup>78</sup>

Missionary George Herber Jones wrote that the status of Korean women in the family was actually high since women did all the weaving, farming, and sometimes factory work in addition to housework. He concluded that a Korean woman was actually the man-of-the house.<sup>79</sup> Instead of seeing the heavy burden and fate of Korean women as the lower class in society, he misinterpreted the Korean women's situation. He did not see the double edge of the family structure in which most of the heavy work was done by women while they were still expected to be obedient to their husbands.

While not intending to demean the missionary effort in educating women and the missionaries' respect for Korean culture, their strategy in Christianizing Korean women was limited due to their lack of awareness of women's issues. Their attitude set an atmosphere within Christianity which gave a highly rationalized reason for the Korean church to bind Korean Christian women, not only with society's patriarchal ideology but also with faithful obedience to the Bible and church, which also contained patriarchal ideology.

The number of Christians in Korea is still increasing, but the situation is not improving for Korean Christian women. The awakening consciousness of women for self identity is still oppressed by the proclamation of the church's faithful, rigid interpretation of the Bible. Some of the interviewees who are or were Christians did share their frustration with the literal interpretation of the Bible.

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Reinhold Niebuhr which can be viewed as a general understanding of sin in Western theologies from a feminist perspective.

<sup>78</sup> Yong Oak Park, 164.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 163.

I tried to find out the meaning of life in the church. But, what I found is authoritarian male pastors who disguise the true human nature. They were all pretenders. They failed to show me the truth. I was deeply disappointed with the church.

This woman has some personal problem yet to be explored, but she is addressing an important point which is one of the deepest problems the Korean church inherited from its early history.

Another middle-aged widow, who has been a faithful church worker, shares her view on Korean Christianity.

I am a church woman. All through my life, I was at church. I did my best for the church. So, I know all the problems a church might have. This is no problem because I understand we can have these problems as in any other place. What bothered me most was the relationship with the male pastor and lay women. So, I went to seminary. My hope is to become a professor at a seminary to train women leaders and pastors. I have seen so many wrong male pastors. I thought I could teach young women to be good leaders at least as good as male pastors. Well, because of financial problems, I could not continue to study. This is one of my *han*. But, I still do have a hope that my experience at church can help raise women leaders of the church. I want to work for the church for the rest of my life.

Again, this woman is addressing the same issue. The male pastor's authority over church women is so deeply embedded that it is worse than the authority of society. The male pastor is the master, and church women are the servants. All the decisions are made by the male pastor, but almost of all the work has to be carried out by women. Women hardly express their opinions in the Korean church because of the belief that it is against God's authority. The only virtue is showing true faith in God.

The church enforces the infrastructure of the male and female subordinate relationship, not only between the pastor and lay women, but also between husband and wife. This reality was well expressed by an interviewee's attitude to her husband in relation to her faith.

I married my husband because he was different from my father. He is now an elder at church. He has a good personality. Because he did not scold me or kick me out when my first daughter was burned with hot water, I have absolute trust in him. Since I met Jesus Christ, I can resolve my anger. Then, I decided once more that I will follow completely my husband's opinion about everything. I will live faithfully for my husband and my children as this is what God wants from me.

This woman felt so grateful for her husband's mercy that she decided to obey him completely, without knowing that her husband's attitude is no more than reasonable behavior. Once more she decided to be obedient to her husband and to be faithful to her family. The church helped her to be more obedient to her husband, instead of helping her to understand the nature of a true loving relationship as an equal human being.

From their fundamentalist view of Christianity, male preachers continuously quote Bible verses to enforce patriarchy without trying to understand the cultural contexts in which the Bible emerged. In the following, a woman shares her frustration with male preachers and asks why all the preachers only quote Paul (1 Cor. 11:1-16). She asked this interviewer, without even taking a breath, what she should do as a Christian women, what is the message of the verse, and why is it in the Bible.

I feel frustration whenever a pastor or some leaders in the church preach about Paul's teaching about women. I know that they are right, but somehow there is some feeling in my heart that it may not be meant that way. I went several times to special seminars about Christian marriage, which I found out did not help me much. One male pastor who came to our church to do a special lecture about marriage used his relationship with his wife as an example. With a high pitched voice, he kept asking men in the church to help their wives who work as hard as their husbands in this difficult immigrant life. He asked them to wash dishes once in a while, but not too many times, because the wife may be spoiled. When he wants to wash dishes for his wife, he has a special message. Then, he illustrated his sentence as a direct quotation. "Go to bed. Sleep." But, he talked in vulgar words which one can use only to a very low person. I still do not understand whether he really uses those words to his wife or just to exaggerate his awkward feeling. Anyway, I was disgusted. He was a pastor and how can he talk like that. One time a female pastor came. She talked about something. She said, "One time, a lay woman visited her pastor crying hard. She said to him that she wanted a divorce because her husband hit her. Then, the male pastor asked her how long she had been married to him. She answered she had been married for 20 years. The pastor slapped her face, and told her that if you did not know in advance when your husband tries to hit you and if you do not understand why you make him mad, you deserve this." I do not remember what context she was using in this episode, but I clearly remember it. I was uneasy, somehow. One time, I went to the Christian Marriage Seminar where a famous male educated pastor was teaching. Some of the content was very helpful. But, again he used Paul's teaching and asked women to obey their husbands because it is God's word which will not change forever. He also said that to have a nice marriage a woman has to know how to take care of herself--to be beautiful. And she should obey her husband, even though he continued to make mistakes, because usually a husband likes that kind of full support

from their wife. Also, he said he believes in hitting children with love, because they sometimes want that. This lecture also did not remove my frustration with Paul's teaching. I felt helpless, and I still do.

This conversation is a clear illustration of the reality of Korean Christian women. This woman is in a double bind. On the one hand she thinks that she has to obey the church teaching; on the other hand her inner voice keeps telling her that something is wrong with this message. Instead of freeing women from their pain and the oppression of society, the church encourages women through divine authority to be more oppressed. This story also points to the danger of female leaders in the church when their consciousness is not raised. Their symbolic role in the church will exert an enormous negative power upon lay church women, causing them to internalize the patriarchal ideology as a normative one.

A young woman in her early 30s, who tried to live her life with determination to be better than her parents, sighed when I asked her to share her life in the church. She ended the interview crying hard and showed sincere appreciation that the research provided an opportunity for her to express her guilt.

I have this need to confess my sin in front of a person. I feel that I would be completely forgiven by God only after I confess to another human being. I know that God forgives me, and I can feel God's love. But, it was difficult to confess to my male pastor. I wondered whether he would understand my feeling and pain . . . I have been raped, and later I became a prostitute. Also, I had several men. They all forced me into sexual relationships as soon as we became close . . . I had to have four abortions . . . After I came to believe in Jesus Christ and God, I realized what a terrible sin I had committed. I cried a lot. Especially after having a healthy baby with my present husband, I feel more painful about my sin . . . I repented and repented . . . Though my past is dirty, my life started new with God and my husband. I will do my best as a woman to my husband, to my children, and to my parents. My life is for them. If there is no God, I could not do it.

Even though belief in God helps this woman to be open to the value of life, several points need to be mentioned. Firstly, her acute awakened awareness of the dignity of life pushes her into guilt without helping her to understand the cause of her sin. And often the emphasis on sin, instead of grace, in Korean churches makes people anxious about their sin instead of freeing them to experience joy in God's forgiveness. Secondly, a question is raised to whether it was necessary to abolish all of the Korean rituals in the Protestant

church. For in this case, if there were some type of confessing ritual, it would help her to release her guilty feelings. Korean Protestant churches want to be purely Protestant while being antagonistic to the culture and to Catholicism. Thirdly, she showed legitimate anxiety in sharing her *han* with a male pastor. In the Korean church, where male pastors have absolute authority, Korean women's *han* cannot effectively be healed due to the male pastors' lack of empathy and level of conscientization. Even though the Korean church needs women pastors to heal Korean women's *han* effectively, women pastors are not welcomed by either denominations or congregations. There are only a few female pastors who are not married and who work primarily in the places where male pastors do not want to minister. The last issue is that this woman again determines to devote her life completely to her family, sacrificing herself once more. Without judging her resolution, there is some doubt that she will succeed since her whole story reveals that she actually had all of these difficulties because she wanted to realize herself in spite of her social conditions. She could not resolve the split view of women due to a lack of vision to reconcile the traditional role and her life-long wish to realize herself.

More often, Korean Christian women cannot expand their personal level of faith to the societal level not only due to their own lack of awareness as individuals, but also because of the ministers' lack of conscientization and the lack of the church's prophetic function which limit the dimension of faith.

A young middle-class, college educated woman formulates her faith with a narrow perception of the world. She shares her insights gained from her faith in Christianity.

I was troubled with my husband's aunt who was hysterical. First, I did not understand, but gradually I could understand her pain. Her hysteria was from her *hanful* life. I could endure this awful experience with her because of my faith in God . . . But, the selfish attitude of elders in the nursing home makes me really sick. They only act selfishly. I promised God that I would educate myself and my children not to be that way. I do not want to be self-centered. Now, I think I can understand other people more easily.

This young woman in her 30s, whose husband is a medical doctor, might have a personal relationship with her God and believe she has changed her view about other people and her

ability to empathize with them. But, unfortunately, her belief could not help her to understand the social condition of old people in nursing homes who try to survive in severe poverty and difficult conditions, with diseases of the aged. Her faith story challenges us to lead church members to widen their view beyond their own families--to society, the world, and the ecology of the earth.

After only 100 years of history, the Korean Protestant church has grown tremendously. While Christianity helped Korean people to experience a new world-view, it also created confusion and conflicts among Christians. In addition to sexism--which already existed--piety, evangelism, and sectarianism were also planted deeply in Korean Christianity. Absolute piety and the missionary attitude toward Korean culture as pagan encouraged Korean Christianity to be extremely exclusive toward its own culture. Without integration of both social concerns and spirituality, two groups of churches exist: one emphasizes only spirituality, the other only social concerns. Both groups of churches do not help Korean Christian women to be aware of the causes of their *han*. Groups that focus on problems of social injustice in the society ignore women's issues, even though these issues are internally related to other injustices and systemic dysfunctions. On the other hand, groups that focus only on spirituality perpetuate Korean Christian women's blindness to their reality.

A few churches in Korea today focus their message on healing of psychological and physical illnesses and overcoming misfortunes. They concentrate on receiving the Holy Spirit, with little concern for the social situation, which may be the fundamental reason for many illnesses.<sup>80</sup> Churches have become shamanized by a shamanism which is already distorted from the influence of patriarchy and lack of self-criticism, and which has no clear

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<sup>80</sup> Kwangsun Suh ed., A Study on the Pentecostal Movement in Korea (Seoul: Christian Academy, 1982).

understanding of the fundamental, shamanistic world-view. One interviewee tells of the influence of the Korean ethos upon her understanding of Christianity.

I once tried to let my husband be healed through the healing power of Jesus. I saw miracles with my eyes. It was exactly the same as in the Bible. When Jesus healed sick people. But, unfortunately, my husband did not believe the stories in the Bible. It was his education that he could not believe it. First, I was deeply disappointed and angry at God for my husband's paralysis. But, then I realized at least all of my family did not die during the war. Then, I felt thankful to God. I started to go to church as before. I believe, even though the suffering I have been through is unbearable, that my children will be blessed. I know that the difficulty we had was due to my ancestor's sin, so that if I am punished completely, at least my children will not suffer in the future. So, I accept all of the calamities.

The strong belief in the faith healing is not the problem, rather the problem is that those who are not healed are sometimes judged by the church and the Christian community (especially those churches which emphasize spiritual healing) as having insufficient faith, and those who are not healed cannot avoid feeling guilty about themselves or becoming angry with God. Focusing only on individual welfare--whether spiritual or worldly--satisfies only individual, narcissistic needs. Also, as related by the interviewee above, for some persons the understanding of sin and blessings comes from the Korean shamanistic world-view, which includes a belief that the cursing or blessing of children is the result of their parents' sin.

As we have seen, the Korean ethos of shamanism has been inherited from before the beginning of Korean history until the present time. The characteristics are: a wholistic view of the world; the importance of internal connectedness among the existences and God; a nondualistic view which overcomes the human tendency to perceive the world as separative; the inheritance of feminine spirituality; religious experience through dancing, singing, and drinking; receiving the spirit collectively as well as individually; and spirituality manifested as a dynamic power for transformation. Unconsciously, these have influenced every dimension of Korean people's lives while integrating, assimilating, and transforming new ideas and values in a very creative way.

While unconsciously inheriting the above positive aspects of Korean ethos, the negative aspects, which are derived from over-emphasizing the Korean shamanistic value system, have also influenced the belief system.<sup>81</sup> For example, connectedness and interdependency perpetuate dependency without responsibility while making people dependent on supernatural power with a fatalistic, magical, and other-worldly attitude. To be in the harmonious flow of the universe leads people to be less legalistic while respecting tradition, but it does not facilitate people to structure an ethical system which can aid them to live with a value system. This non-structural, non-legalistic tendency of shamanistic thinking allows the Confucian patriarchal ethic to overwhelm the Korean people's lives, focusing only on norms in the system rather than expanding its norm beyond human society. Moreover, Confucianism's family-centered selfishness perpetuates the focus on family interest only, and religious people tend to focus primarily on family interests rather than on the interests of the community.

Unlike Christianity's tendency to value only the spiritual dimension while degrading worldly life and nature, the importance of a life in the shamanistic world-view, which has helped Korean people to perceive life in the world positively, also has been over-extended so that people tend to focus only on this worldly happiness. People tend to value the practical gain even from religion without constructing a vision for the future. The high value on a hierarchical social system forces people also to be dependent and vulnerable to authority, which drives people to seek formality in religion and lose a prophetic critical mind toward the system and religion. Thus, the power to transform society is weakened because of adjusting to the system. Moreover, the openness of the Korean people to the

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<sup>81</sup> See Tong Shik Ryu, "The Religions of Korea and the Personality of Koreans," in Traditional Religion and Korean Culture by Tong Shik Ryu. See also Chang Sik Lee, "Rethinking Some Aspects of Devotional Life." Ryu's article shows his early negative attitude toward Korean culture and people, but he changes his attitude after studying Korean shamanism. Although Ryu's article does not articulate the Korean personality clearly, it is useful to read in understanding how the Korean personality is viewed generally.



spiritual world helps them to experience the presence of God in a wholistic way instead of through rational thinking only; but the strong emotional experience of the spiritual world actually makes people excessively dependent on emotions. Emotion becomes the primary element in religion, which results in poverty in theological thinking.

The spirituality of Korean shamanism has both positive and negative influences on the Korean people's religious life. In spite of its negative function, spirituality has helped Korean women to survive. Being alienated from society, women seek an intrinsic value in religion, rather than an extrinsic one. They become more open to spirituality which facilitates them to experience the Divine power.<sup>82</sup> To meet the spiritual need of Korean people, some churches provide an the environment for religious ecstasy.<sup>83</sup> Psychological studies reveal that an ecstatic religious experience can be produced socially by even a minimal stimulation unrelated to deprivation, acculturation, or other social stress.<sup>84</sup> The ecstasy will be accelerated if a person in pain desperately wants comfort from God. The study also claims that religious ecstasy clearly helps to release tension and anxiety for a short period of time, and some people prefer ecstatic experiences rather than struggling with everyday life problems. Thus, instead of empowering themselves to transform reality, out of helplessness they become spiritually addicted.<sup>85</sup> One study shows that shamanism is deeply embedded not only in women but in lay people and ministers as well.

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<sup>82</sup> Joseph F. Byrnes, The Psychology of Religion (New York: Free Press, 1984), 187.

<sup>83</sup> Jinhong Chung, "Phenomena and Structure of the Rapid Growing Church," A Study on the Pentecostal Movement in Korea, ed. Kwangsun Suh, (Seoul: Christian Academy, 1982), 126-40. He describes healing prayer and the environment of the Full Gospel Church in Korea, the largest Christian church in the world.

<sup>84</sup> Byrnes, 187.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

A large number of Korean ministers and lay people who were interviewed also show a strong belief in some shamanistic superstition.<sup>86</sup>

Korean Christianity has struggled not to be influenced by culture in order to be a "genuine" Christianity; but now it has to acknowledge how deeply it has become acculturated. Unfortunately, due to a lack of understanding of the Korean spiritual ethos, Korean Christianity assimilated only those aspects which already had been over emphasized in a negative way. Consequently, the Korean church does not shed a true liberating light for women or men to be free as Jesus taught. Korean Christianity now faces a challenge in her history either to let the gospel be a true gospel or to let the oppressors extend their power. In this challenge, male and female Christians must struggle together to realize God's creative purpose in this world since both oppressor and oppressed are under the power of evil. Now is the time for the Korean church to hear Korean women's *han*, so that women can name not only their pain, but also their hope for God's presence in this world.<sup>87</sup>

For wholistic growth to occur, there has to be a dialectical process emerging from Korean soil, between theological reflection and the people's experience of God in their lives. One of the reasons for the poverty in theological thinking is the opposing view between the Korean ethos and the fundamental value in Western theology. The unconscious Korean world-view cannot make connections when it faces Christianity. Thus a new understanding of Korean spirituality has to be reviewed, not only to search for the root of spirituality to make connecting points with Christianity, but also to expand the theology itself from a separatistic view to a relational one which will heal the brokenness.

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<sup>86</sup> Kwangsun Suh, A New Understanding of Korean Christianity, 110.

<sup>87</sup> Sheila Collins, "Theology in the Politics of Appalachian Women," Womanspirit Rising, 152-53.

### Function of Spirituality for Korean Women's *Han*

Religious experience leads to psychological and attitudinal changes while creating a deepened understanding about self, the world, and God. Therefore spirituality, including religious experience, weaves together all dimensions of the human psyche. The question is whether spirituality--which interacts with society and so is not devoid of patriarchal influence--helps women, particularly Korean women, to fully live their God-given lives. If it does, the question is in what way has spirituality helped them to heal their *han* and how does it promote wholistic growth. If spirituality does not heal and promote growth, the blocking, negative functions must be examined. This examination entails the following questions: In what way has patriarchal society influenced individual spiritual formation? What has been the impact of social influence on Korean women's spiritual life? To grapple with the answers to these questions, the relationship between religious experience and the health of the human psyche, and the process of the formation of God's image are discussed with reference to positive and negative functions. Further, the power of image on the human psyche and the patriarchal influence on the image of God are explored.

The heart of Korean spirituality is its view of all existence as one connected whole without rejecting diversity. *Han*, suffering, is the stage of brokenness of this existential mode. The dynamic power of *han* is the life force which drives the ever continuing effort to recover this original state of oneness, even though it may appear to be very negative on the surface. The phenomenon of this dynamic power of *han* manifests itself as social movements which attempt the recovery of broken connectedness among people, and as religious experiences which attempt reunion with God. These two aspects of spirituality are not however exclusive, but interdependent in early shamanism.

Religious experience has helped Korean women, who have been full of *han* from their early history, to reconnect with God and people. Since shamanism focuses on religious experiences, people are open to the numinous world, and more often they experience the presence of divine spirituality either collectively or individually. Thus, the

shaman's acute religious experience, both in initiation and in ritual, is another authentic dimension of shamanism which facilitates people's connectedness with divine spirituality. Christianity, as a major religion in Korea, has also helped the Korean people in many ways. Therefore, in this section the function of both shamanism and Christianity in relation to Korean women's *han* is discussed.

Religious Experience of Shamanism and Korean Women's *Han*.

Karak Kooki, a historical document, relates that Korean people have had religious experiences through shaman rituals either individually or collectively as a member of the community. People heard the mystic sounds of God, gathered together, and received the spirit collectively in ecstasy in the community ritual.<sup>88</sup> Individual beings experience union with God directly in ecstasy or in an initiation ordeal. But in indirect experiences the mediator, who has already experienced union with God and who has the power to connect with God, mediates the union between God and people usually with a ritual accompanied by singing, dancing, and drinking.<sup>89</sup> The *Kut* (ritual in shamanism) allows people to experience spirituality for recreation and renewal, both for the individual and also for the group or community spirit.<sup>90</sup>

In community ritual, a people's awareness of their repressed *han* emerges, which leads to the desire to resolve their *han* through divine power. This communal ecstasy helps people to release their *han* and to name the contradictions of the society. The astute awareness of societal discrepancies drives them to envision a new society, which also helps them to have an identity as one body. Through the experience of a divine power, people

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<sup>88</sup> Yul Kyu Kim, "Korean Shamanism and Folk Customs," A Study on Korean Shamanism, ed. Inhoe Kim, 64.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 70.

regain the vitality of life and experience peace from reconciliation. But more often this dynamic power was not strong enough to challenge and transform the social structure.

Even in private ritual, the religious experience of shamanism has been more of a collective one. A shaman, who experiences direct contact with divine power, creates a sacred place where others can also experience the presence of that power. A shaman also practices ritual for an individual who wants to resolve her *han* through divine power. Through ritual, one can share one's *han* with a divine power through the shaman, who transforms her or himself into a divine, or mediates between the divine power and the person. However, this individualistic ritual is not an individual one. In the shamanism ritual there is always a participating audience. All share and resolve their own *han* by experiencing the process of resolution between God through the shaman and an individual. The climax of the ritual is possible because of the empathic understanding of the audience and their experiencing of their own *han*.

As discussed, shamanism and Korean women's *han* are closely connected due to their similar status in society as marginal. Moreover, the structure of shamanism provides a space in which Korean women can identify themselves with the divine figure. The assumptions of this researcher are as follows.

1. The concept of the Sky God is differentiated into two: one as the ultimate transcendent power and the other as divine Father Sky God who descended into the world to be united with Mother Earth Goddess who had the power of rebirth.<sup>91</sup> Thus, Father Sky God and Mother Earth Goddess have equal importance in the mind of the Korean people. Therefore, women can easily identify themselves with the Mother Earth Goddess because of the power of creation.

2. Korean women--who do not have political power over the social structure--become marginal but have the characteristics of *communitas* as Victor Turner describes in

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<sup>91</sup> Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 58-59.

his book, Ritual Process. Being marginal, women as a weak, powerless group have moral and spiritual power which is viewed as polluting, dangerous, mystical, and moral. Anti-structure is more open to the morality and spirituality compared to those of the structured system.<sup>92</sup> As Laurel Kendall criticizes the view that shamanism practiced by Korean women is a "feminist subculture" within their "peripheral" social status,<sup>93</sup> Korean women's spirituality embedded in the shamanistic world-view has actually been the main stream of spirituality in Korea.

3. Korean women, whose lives have been full of *han*, are the group within the society who most desperately seek help from a divine power to relieve their burden of life. Oppression forces Korean women to be open to spirituality.

Therefore, Korean women's *hanful* lives cannot avoid being internally related to shamanism. When a woman experiences acute pain in life because she cannot thoroughly internalize the society's value system and conform to it, she becomes psychologically or physically sick, or flees into the spiritual world. When a woman's keen awareness of her reality cannot be resolved by her own power, she becomes sick. Youngsook Kim Harvey's ethnographic study of Korean women shamans delineates the personality of these women. She concludes that all of them have: a high level of intelligence; creative improvisation; verbal fluency and persuasiveness; strong goal orientation (willful, self-centered, self-reliant, and self-directed); a keen sensitivity to the intuitive cues of others; calculating and manipulative interpersonal skills; a sharp sense of justice in terms of their own standards; and a dramatic, artistic, and attractive appearance.<sup>94</sup> This study shows the strong personality of shamans as compared to the Korean norm for women. She also concludes that

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<sup>92</sup> Turner, 109-10.

<sup>93</sup> Kendall, 24-25.

<sup>94</sup> Youngsook Kim Harvey, Six Korean Women (St. Paul: West Publishing, 1979), 235-36.

Another pattern common to all six shamans was the severe conflicts they experienced, prior to assuming the shaman role, between their individual sense of self and the definition of the domestic role they had to accept and enact . . . [they] had inordinate difficulty in reconciling either cognitively or emotionally the discrepancies they perceived between social expectations of them as women and their personal goals and interest as individuals. They were critical of cultural norms others accepted as givens in their lives, were hypersensitive to cultural inconsistencies, and suffered from a deep and abiding sense of having been morally injured as human beings.<sup>95</sup>

Many Korean women are compelled to be psychologically or physically ill, or a few sometimes become shaman to find relief from their hanful reality, especially those who have acute conscious and unconscious awareness.<sup>96</sup> In certain cases, psychological illnesses and acute religious experiences are desperate attempts to set "an individual free from what has been blocking his [one's] development, and in effecting a reorganization of the personality."<sup>97</sup> Psychological illnesses which become the avenue for religious experience are attempts to solve unsurmountable life crises by getting rid of unacceptable thoughts in one's mind. Emotional disturbances have a purpose and sometimes can serve a constructive purpose for a person who faces death-like calamities which undoubtedly question one's ultimate reason for life.<sup>98</sup> Such experiences question the meaning of one's life in the universe, which inevitably leads to the religious question. Bou-yong Rhi perceives *han* as the precondition of Korean women's religious experiences.<sup>99</sup> *Han* is the etiology of psychotic and acute religious experiences for Korean women.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 236-37.

<sup>96</sup> Bou-yong Rhi, "Psychological Study on Korean Shamanism," A Study on Korean Shamanism, ed., Inhoe Kim, 156. However, there are a few great women leaders who not only overcome the obstacles of the society, but also make great contributions to society.

William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Collier, 1961) 116, 197-208.

<sup>97</sup> Anton T. Boisen, The Exploration of the Inner World (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936), 60.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>99</sup> Bou-yong Rhi, "Psychological Study on Korean Shamanism," 156.

Korean women shamans experience their *hanful* life in the oppressed society not only as finite human beings, but as Korean women. Their *han* is resolved by acquiring divine power, but their resolution always leads to complete obedience to the call to help other people, as in other religious conversion experiences.<sup>100</sup> Here is an example of a woman shaman's divine words to her spiritual daughter at the latter's initiation ritual, *Naerim Kut*..

A woman has to walk a narrow path. Can a woman walk a wide road? The disciple of God lives in pain, there are no easy days; there are many *hanful* days in a shaman's life. Do you think you will not have any pain or *han*, when you become a daughter of God? In the past, your pain was the only pain you had. When you become a shaman, all people's pain is your pain. Rich, poor, good, or bad, treat them with the same honesty. You did not become God's daughter for the good and rich people.<sup>101</sup>

A shaman who experiences the same miserable situations as any other Korean women can be a mediator for relieving Korean women's *han* by helping them to experience the divine world. Through ritual they deliver God's comfort, which strengthens other suffering women to endure their difficult lives in spite of their unbearable pains. Being oppressed as the lowest in society, Korean women are more open to a spirituality in which they can perceive hope beyond their miserable present reality. *Han* and shamanism are inseparable. Spirituality has helped Korean women to be comforted and released from their repressed feelings. It helps them to have encouragement, endurance, and tolerance within their miserable reality with an anticipation for a better future.

In spite of some positive functions of shamanism for Korean women, shamanism also has negative functions.<sup>102</sup> Besides the general negative function of shamanism

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<sup>100</sup> Boisen, 204.

<sup>101</sup> Cited in Taegon Kim, "A Study of Shaman's Mystic Illness during Initiation Process in Korea," *Asia Women's Study* [Seoul] 9 (1971), 91-133.

<sup>102</sup> A study of residents in rural areas shows the effect of shamanism's healing for psychotic illnesses. One study shows 38.4% experienced favorable improvement, and another study shows 23.1-54.6% experienced favorable healing effects from shamanistic treatment. See Bou-yong Rhi, "Psychological Study on Korean Shamanism," 157.



discussed earlier, it prevents Korean women from being sensitized to their reality.<sup>103</sup> A person who has the power to live her or his life can have responsibility for her or his life. If one does not have that power, then a person cannot assume responsibility. In shamanism, a shaman helps women without power to control their lives and release the anxiety caused by conflict. But projecting the cause to ancestors or evil spirits prevents women from being responsible, and comfort from a divine power also accelerates the dependency.<sup>104</sup>

Because it projects all causes to the external world, shamanism deprives one of the opportunity to be self-critical or to gain the insight which will lead to conscientization and growth without self-pity or self-judgement. Korean society excludes women's participation in the political domain, which has resulted in the lack of historical consciousness in Korean women. Women are confined to the family and gradually become deeply unconscious of their participation in history making. Powerlessness and the need for survival forces women to focus on present practical problems, which causes them to be individualistic and pragmatic without ever bothering to analyze their problems, theorize their experiences, or organize their collective power to challenge the root of their *han*. Women have been separated from each other. Conscientization or socialization of their awareness can never be collective as long as their awareness becomes a communal power to transform their reality.

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<sup>103</sup> Freud sees the function of religion as a part of an elaborate defense system to keep the personality secure until maturity. To be a healthy person, he argues, a person has to grow out of religion. See Freud, Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices, vol. 9 of SE.

<sup>104</sup> One study on the subject has been done by Dawnhee Yim Janelli, Faith, Fortunetelling, and Social Failure (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 9-10. The research reveals the interdependency between social responsibility and dependency on fortunetelling. Women with greater social responsibilities showed a lower degree of faith in fortunetelling, and women with low social responsibilities give evidence of possessing a higher degree of faith in fortunetelling.

Christianity and Korean Women's *Han*.

The negative functions of shamanism for Korean women are not embedded in the ethos of shamanism, but rather in its function--perpetuated by patriarchy--which blocks vital dynamic power. Then, questions arise as to whether Christianity has helped Korean women resolve their *han* in a positive way.

A woman in her 70s shares her faith journey.

There were so many times we just couldn't feed ourselves during the war. We had to survive. But, I learned my God always protected and guided us to live during those difficult days. Either God provided us some food when we were starving, by someone at the right time, or gave us the wisdom to get food. When someone gave us food at the right time, I knew God sent that person to us . . . . From my life experience, I learned also that if I did my best in the interest of others, I received the best treatment from others . . . . When I pray at night, I feel like I am in heaven. So pleasant, so comfortable, I want to go to God right away . . . . Once, I was really disappointed with church. We were important members of the church, but when we came back after my husband was paralyzed, nobody really comforted us . . . . I don't know how God will evaluate my life, but I believe in the existence of heaven and my return to God. This I know and this knowledge is the comforting resource for me nowadays.

As she explains it, her faith is in a very personal God who intervenes in her daily life and survival. God has been the source of life and helps her to face her death not with anxiety, but in peace. Instead of a bleak fear of death, she has a hope of returning to God, the eternal peace. She developed generativity late in life and learned from life experiences the Golden Rule of Jesus. She had a strong desire to learn in her youth, and had to abandon this goal due to historical and social situations. But faith in God has been the pulling and sustaining power for her *hanful* life. Nonetheless, her church community could not support her when she needed it most.

One of the interviewee shares her faith story about her own inner conflict with her personal and religious life.

I always went to church in my childhood. But, when I got married, my mother-in-law was strongly against my going to church. She used to tear up the Bible . . . . My husband failed in his business due to his personality. He had a relationship with another woman. Even though I knew I had to forgive him, I started to hate him . . . . Then I got really sick. I had to support my family by working day and night. My health was deteriorating.

Dissatisfaction and tiredness was the reason. I was really sick. I was only 80 lbs, and fell into a coma. I dreamed all kinds of things during a high fever. I was almost dead. My mother told me the reason I was sick was that I didn't go to church even though I used to go church all my life before marriage. I could not drink or eat for 20 days. There was no reason for my illness, but everybody thought I was going to die. One day, a group of people visited my neighbor patient. They were church people with a pastor. I found myself singing the hymn . . . . The pastor prayed for me laying hands on my head. I still remember the whole prayer. I knew that the Holy Spirit was present at that moment. Then I prayed all night without sleeping. I was in a fire all around me. The world was on fire. I was in the middle of fire. I started to confess. This is the first time I prayed like this. I felt the need to pray desperately to get out of the fire. I sweated all over. Then, at one moment I started to thank God. I realized God's feeling toward me: God's pain for me. There was no resentment. I felt God loved me, Jesus was the love. I realized how much God loved me, and how gracious God was. . . . All of a sudden, I realized I became well . . . . Everything was beautiful . . . . Even after this experience, I still could not forgive my husband. He broke the promise. I know my problem is my perfectionism. I prayed to God. I saw visions while I prayed. I asked God to help me to forgive my husband. The deepest forgiveness cannot be done by my power. I asked God to give that power to me and God answered my prayer. I realize that I am not God. Even though I knew I had to forgive, I couldn't. You have to accept that powerlessness and the need to depend on God. It has to come from grace, somewhere, from God. Without knowing how, it comes naturally. I prayed a long time, more than two or three hours. Then, I started to have confidence that I would have the power to forgive.

This story reveals the traditional view of Christianity and shamanism. Her mother and mother-in-law symbolize the polarity between two religious belief systems and their fear of transgression, which might cause disaster in their family. The interviewee might unconsciously have a conflict between the two belief systems which could cause her illness besides her difficulties in life. Without having any answers for her conflict, she went through an initiation ordeal until she reconciled with God. Encountering God facilitated reconciliation with herself and with her husband. She gained the power to forgive, and experienced an attitude change. She states that she will work for the church, particularly for church women. However, the pain from betrayal by her husband could not be easily overcome even after she experienced God. She confesses that she actually forgave her husband completely at his deathbed. She feels guilt more strongly after experiencing God, since she feels the urgent need to forgive others. This suggests the need to provide professional help for those who are suffering from various causes in order to free them

from the guilt. Again, a ritual of confession is needed by the Protestant church as in the confession ritual of the Catholic church.

A woman in her 40s tells her story with a sad and calm voice.

Even after my marriage, I still hated myself a lot. Full of resentment, I always felt inferior and had low self-esteem. I was arrogant without knowing God. I went to church without truly knowing God. About 10 years ago, when I had a third baby, I had insomnia from asthma. I couldn't breath through the nose. It was so painful. It continued for several months. There was no cause. No medication worked. One of the neighbors told me to pray. Praying is the spiritual breath, she said. I was slowly approaching God. The closer I came to God, the more I had bad dreams full of ghost figures. One night, all of a sudden, a song came to me. I started to sing that hymn with all my sincere longing for God. Then suddenly I felt peace which I had never experienced before. I decided to go to a house church one day after this experience, and on the way to that meeting all of sudden I could breath through my nose. It was like putting some refreshing mint medicine in my nose. I knew at once that I was healed by God. I thanked God, and I started to pray on the street. When I arrived at that house, one of the old lady deacons started to cry with joy at my coming and thanked God. I remember that moment so vividly with a thankful heart, I do the same thing whenever I teach other members or meet new people. From that time, I have lived with my God. I am in his hands. There is no way to escape from God. I know my God will protect me, guide me, and bring me out of suffering. This God is not the God of fear, but of love . . . Now my goal in life is to live more spiritually and live as God tells me. I always thank God, and I know when I am not happy I am far away from God. When I met my true God, I thoroughly repented of my anger. God forgives me and I forgive the people I used to hate. But, that does not mean that I can completely forget everything. Pain is still there. But I try not to think of it but try to reconcile through God. I never finished anything. But now I have completed four years of Bible study at . . . church. I like the last question of the assignment which asks us to reflect on our own life . . . I know God acknowledges me, but I want to have my own identity.

This interviewee, who wanted to go college so desperately, again shares her struggle from low self-esteem. Due to her inner conflict, she suffered physically, psychologically, and spiritually. She encountered God through an initiation ordeal accompanied by ghost dreams, as in Jung's archetype which contains images of evolution and human history including one's own cultural ancestors. She resolves her anger through experiencing God's love for her. Her God is also a personal God who loves her and protects her. Her attitude toward others changes and she tries to live for others. She experienced a transformation of value. Again, she needed help to heal her psychological and spiritual

wounds. This also shows the important role of small meetings which provide support for members, and in which a suffering woman can relate to other women by sharing their *han* and the experience of their God. Nonetheless, stories about her identity struggles ended with her accepting completely the role of an obedient wife and sacrificing mother.

The former prostitute's story and her resolution, after accepting Christ as her savior, also reveals the internalization of the social norm more firmly.

I learned from society and from church members how to live with my husband. I respect my husband, I sacrifice myself, I encourage him like a baby. Then he is glad, and respects me, too. Though my past is dirty, my life started new with God and my husband. I will do my best as a woman for my husband, my children, my parents. My life is for them. If there was no God, I couldn't do it. But God leads me always. God is with me all the time. My religion is an absolute to my life.

It is essential to have church and community support, but what she learned from them were patriarchal ethics and passive-aggressive manipulation in marriage rather than healthy, interdependent relationships. She is fortunate to start a new family life, but her life-long struggle to be herself seems to disappear. She resolves her inner conflict, between her desire to be herself and the normative role of society, by accepting the latter as God's will. She cannot not resolve her vision of self-realization with the normative woman's role in society.

One of the interviewees, who is a Catholic, expresses her own personal relationship with God.

My husband's oxygen tank sounded like God's breath, a spiritual song. I accepted my husband's fatal illness after all those difficulties we went through. I accepted the future, too. My heart was peaceful. But, when he actually died, I was angry at God. I shouted at God, "If you want to destroy me more, do it now." I knew he would die, but I could not help being angry with God . . . Now, I work in this place, the Dominican Father's house. They have a small chapel downstairs. I go there during the night. Also, I go there first thing in the morning . . . God teaches me through dream. I know in advance what will happen to me through dreams . . . Now, I know from the bottom of my heart that my God protects me, guides me, and teaches me all the time . . . I live with God. Sometimes I even nag my God asking for this and that. But God answers me all the time. I even ask God to let me meet my husband in my dreams, and God answers me. My love of God is like my love for parents and husband. I can do anything through my God. Like a conversation with my husband or

parents, I talk to God through my heart. I sometimes share my conflict about my sexual desire with Jesus; then Jesus tells me what to do such as having a hot bath. Then, the desire disappears, and that is why I can live without man unlike other widows.. Now, I try to understand others from their position. I think I grew from the midst of pain. I feel very humble now. If I am born again, then I want to help other pain filled women through counseling by studying psychology.

This interviewee's expressions of God are so intimate that her God is more like her inner self. There is almost no boundary between her God and herself. She is listening to her inner voice and wisdom. Her experience with God is the immanency of God rather than the transcendency of God, and this immanent God even helps her to resolve her physical sexual desire. God is no longer outside of her; she lives with God, and God lives within her. God is part of her. She understands God as Shug in The Color Purple, and came to trust her understanding of God as she gained trust in herself.

God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you look for.<sup>105</sup>

A woman in her 40s expresses her spiritual journey for her identity.

I feel like there is no clear way of life for me right now. I am confused. I am neither male nor female. My sexuality may be taken away. I have to find my true self. I have not found it yet, but I think I am on the way to finding it. Soon I hope I can find myself . . . I will do good things for my soul. I know my soul will continue to live after death. This process of spiritual growth will continue and I will be who I am spiritually in this world even after death . . . I do not value any material things in this world. I will seek what is true. I go to a shaman when I feel the therapist does not help me in certain areas, for example my spiritual quest. Another reason for me to go to a shaman is for practical guidance in the future. With the therapist, I try to find myself, who I am, what I want . . . But, God is everywhere regardless of religious institutions. God is dead to me now. God is like a pyramid in morning fog . . . It is a dead, not a living God for me. God never gazes its eye upon me . . . Now, I can understand all kinds of people. I can be in their situation. I know how they feel. There is no discrimination in my heart against any people. I hope to find the true me, and grow in spirit to reach the point of myself. I know I have to face death myself. I have no desire to stay in this world.

This interviewee did not hesitate to share her conflict in searching for her identity. She is deeply confused between the ideas of femininity formed in patriarchal society and her

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<sup>105</sup> Alice Walker, 202.

intuitive feeling of femininity. Because she does not know how to name her feeling, or to identify her intuitive image of femininity within her cultural context, she believes that she is neutered. However, she exhibits a strong desire to find her true self even though she could not identify it yet, since her inner knowledge thrust her to search further. When a woman starts to feel emptiness or nothingness, she starts to question her identity within society and the universe. Even without any belief system, she can easily identify her connectedness with the universe, and the continuity of spirituality and connectedness with other humans. While sharing her spiritual journey with the researcher, this woman in her 40s also expressed her disappointment with the church which emphasizes male authority instead of true spirituality. Her awareness and her strong sense of identity cannot but help her to deny any institutional religion which encompasses patriarchy, yet she will seek her self and her true spirituality however exhaustive the search may be.

She is rather free from society's norm, and does not show much shame, as an educated woman with prestige, to consult a shaman. She does not hesitate to seek help from a therapist, which may be considered shameful in her cultural context. She seems very pragmatic in dealing with daily matters. She thinks God is dead for her, which means that the male God is dead. But the lack of a feminine God image, spirituality, and language in her society leaves her very isolated without knowing how to make the connection with feminine spirituality and God. Existing in a vacuum, she believes she has been rejected by God. Nonetheless, her confusion over a God and religion that are patriarchal, as opposed to feminine spirituality, continues.

One interviewee had faith in her early life, but could not continue her faith in God due to external calamities. She is in a state of anger toward God for her unfortunate life situation.

I believed in a Christian God when I attended the church. My husband was a real good Christian, but he is dead. My son hanged himself in the church yard where he used to go . . . . I do not believe in God anymore. But, I believe that the universe itself is God. One of my good friends asked me to believe in some kind of religion. She said she does not have any more

conflict with her husband since she stopped seeing him as incompetent, even though he could not do anything. She said that her religion helped her to be completely obedient to her husband. Then, the conflict disappeared. She said that she prays all the time, and whatever she prays she gets the exact answer. But, I have no interest in that religion either . . . I have no hope in this world or the other world. All I want is to die. Nothing interests me anymore.

Here we can read some aspects of religion's function. The religion of the interviewee's friend helped her to resolve her conflict. In marriage, it is important to adjust to each other rather than ask the other person to change. But the friend did not see the fundamental problems in her marriage due to the social norm, and changed herself into a more oppressed and obedient wife. This perpetuates in her characteristics which are manipulative, individualistic, and self-centered toward herself, her family, and even God. Thus, this religion prevents further growth after resolving conflicts, and binds her in infantile dependency and manipulation. The interviewee openly reveals her strong anger toward her beloved husband's and her son's death. She is stuck in the grief process from which she cannot see any hope. Religion can facilitate the grief process or prevent it by superficially oppressing the anger. In this case, the interviewee's previous belief became shattered and was abolished even though her faith could have grown in positive ways to help her overcome the pain. From the above analysis, it is possible to compare the traditional healing belief systems in shamanism and Christianity, examine the similarities and differences, and explore how they can help to alleviate Korean women's *han*.

For women, at least for Korean women, the social condition coerces them to adjust to an internalized social norm and forces them to have a split self. Acute awareness and the conflict from a split self propel them into illness. In The Varieties of Religious Experience, William James describes the differences between the healthy-minded and the sick-soul.<sup>106</sup> The healthy-minded are content with the world, and live without much conflict or reflection about life; they do not need a twice-born experience. But the sick-soul perceives the world as evil in its essence, so that to be happy one needs to be born again. These sick-soul

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<sup>106</sup> William James, 76, 112.



people cannot adjust to the environment, and some of them believe that there is no way to be happy without supernatural intervention because of human wickedness.

Therefore, "sick-souls" usually have high sensitivity to and awareness of pain, often accompanied with a belief in the possibility of another spiritual world in the universe. The sick-soul suffers from awareness of one's own dividedness, and religious experience helps to overcome the image of a split self through feelings of joy and centering. This leads one to be more open toward other people and the world, and directs one's life to the newly perceived truth. People feel free from their previous bondage to evil, and rejoice in an ecstatic union with God.

The explication of religious experience by James is a relevant description of Korean women's religious experience, both in shamanism and Christianity. Generally, women are more open to the spiritual world since their experience as birth-giving beings makes them aware of the connectedness among other existences. But, besides women's strong tendencies to connect with the divine world, the environment forces Korean women to be more open to the spiritual world. From this experience, Korean women perceive a God with whom they can have an intimate, personal relationship. God freely intervenes in their lives in the midst of unbearable sufferings, while promising a future in which one will be relieved from all of this pain. God affirms them and accepts them with unconditional love, so that they can have trust in other people. It is an empowering experience and therefore they gain a value in life and learn the meaning of existence. It is clearly religion's function to provide a person with the meaning of life.<sup>107</sup> Two interviewees in this dissertation study, who do not have a religion, expressed no sense of meaning or desire in life. Thus,

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<sup>107</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, Religions, Values and Peak-Experiences (New York: Penguin, 1976). Maslow explicates the religious experience as peak experience which transcends institutional religion. This experience provides a person with the meaning of life and with values(B-values). See Maslow, Appendix A 59 and Appendix G 91.

due to meaninglessness in this world, people search for spirituality which can provide a deeper level of meaning and connection with the Ultimate Reality.

While both shamanism and Christianity help Korean women to resolve their *han* by helping them adjust better to society, both religions block their awareness of their reality which they have to transform to find the true meaning of life.<sup>108</sup> It can be asked whether the interviewee who struggles to find her true self, rejecting what society or the church confirm, is sicker than other women because she cannot adjust to either society or church.

Freud offered a deterministic view of human beings based on naturalism and rationalism, and thought that the more people gained knowledge the more people will move away from religion--which is only the projection of oneself on the universe.<sup>109</sup> Freud speculated on the role of religion as an expression of the maintenance of infantile needs and dependencies on a sovereign father, and as a form of obsessive-compulsive neurosis.<sup>110</sup> His theory of religion cannot avoid criticism, but nonetheless he astutely points to a negative aspect of religion's function. Many of the interviewees resolve their inner conflict by submitting themselves completely to God. By doing this, their inner conflicts, which are unresolved feelings due to discrepancies in the world, are repressed once more without their ever trying to determine the cause of their pain. Many of them surrender themselves completely and depend solely on God. But there is no conscious awareness that the self they need to surrender is a false self or a feeling of nonbeing shaped by culture, and that the process of giving up this self has to entail a new awareness of the true self. There are sounds of budding identity. But most of the time women try to erase these sounds, denying their inner voice in an effort to internalize the social norm. As Freud's criticism of

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<sup>108</sup> For a discussion of the "problematic nature of women's spirituality," see the article by Joann Wolski Conn, "Women's Spirituality: Restriction and Reconstruction," in *Women's Spirituality*, ed. Joann Wolski Conn (New York: Paulist, 1986), 10.

<sup>109</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927; reprint, New York: Norton, 1961), 38.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

religion maintains, both shamanism and Christianity encourage Korean women to be once more helplessly dependent on God and men, instead of forming interdependent relationships with full integrity and respect for each other.

Moreover, Christianity further oppresses Korean women with the traditional, Confucian patriarchal value. Unlike shamanism which facilitates Korean women to reach a catharsis with their *han*, Christianity stirs more guilty feelings which will cause Korean women to perceive themselves once again as the sinners which society has labeled them as being.<sup>111</sup> Even though they seem to resolve their conflict, many women are confused about their identity and continue asking the same questions. Only the unsettled interviewee, who may be viewed as sick or deviant by society but who is not bound by institutional religion, seems to seek her identity earnestly and acknowledges her inner power even though she cannot yet identify it.

Shamanism and Christianity have functioned positively by providing a spiritual domain in which Korean women can rest and resolve their pain, but both have failed to help Korean women to be empowered to transform their reality because both have a privatized narcissistic spirituality. Christianity, which came to Korean women as a liberating gospel for their *hanful* lives, actually binds them tighter to God with patriarchal ideology--the authority of a male God. As Jung says, religious experience has a function to make people's life "healthier, more beautiful, more complete and more satisfactory"<sup>112</sup> to themselves and the people to whom they relate. However, a religious institution or belief system which cannot be separated from the patriarchal society makes women subservient and too inert to vision their dreams, even in God's world.

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<sup>111</sup> See Plaskow, *Sex, Sin and Grace* for a woman's perspective about the traditional concept of sin, especially as sin is perceived by Reinhold Niehbuhr and Paul Tillich. Plaskow submits that the concept of sin for a woman has to be different from a man's due a woman's different experience in patriarchal society.

<sup>112</sup> Carl G. Jung, *The Psychology of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), 114.

Christianity in Korea, with its separatistic view, does not let Korean women speak their *han*. Without having a place to share their *han*, they suffer once more by not having the power to name their *han*. When they have no power to name their pain, they cannot vision God's world in their life. Their belief is privatized and segmented. To transform the reality, *han* has to be transformed into a collective dynamic power. Thus, *han* has to be shared by women to identify and to name the pain, to be aware of the cause, and to have collective power.

### Image of God in Shamanism and Christianity

The authenticity of humankind is the ability to make symbols from experiences in the world. Symbols lay the foundation for people to organize their lives with meanings. Among religious symbols, the symbol of God provides the highest and the most significant domain in human psychology, because symbols, particularly that of the image of God, point to a numinous absolute reality which is beyond peoples' consciousness. Therefore, the image of God supersedes any other symbols in influencing people's psyche.<sup>113</sup> The questions then are: How can persons shape their image of God? What are the images of God in the traditional belief system which may still exist as the collective unconsciousness in Korean people? How has the male image of God in Christianity functioned in Korean Christian women's lives? What will be the image of God which can empower Korean Christian women to live their God given lives fully?

### Process of Re-constructing an Image

Constructing an image is a psychological phenomena ensuing from psychological, emotional experiences. First, a child starts to have an awareness of self as a separate subject, while perceiving things other than her or himself as an object. The concept of self evolves through the process of interpreting one's whole experience, which entails the

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<sup>113</sup> David Elkind, "The Origins of Religion in the Child," Growing Edges in the Psychology of Religion, ed., John R. Tsdale (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1980), 109.

pattern of perceiving oneself and the world, including the image of God. The pattern shaped by early life experiences has enormous power upon later life, but this pattern is changeable since a person constantly tries to make meaning out of life. This urge inevitably forces one to continue the process of building new patterns.

According to object-relations theory, psychologically a child goes through the process of constructing objects from the first moment of life. Object-relations theory largely advocates that the process of separation and differentiation of a child from the mother is a process of forming the concept of self and objects. However, the process of constructing the perception of self and objects always results in a process of projection. One's perception of self and objects is always different from the real self and objects. Object-relation theorists conceive this process of projection as an important process of maturation. D. W. Winnicott articulates the importance of play or fantasy in childhood which provides room for a child to create a transitional place, the third or illusory world which is neither inner reality nor external fact.<sup>114</sup> In play, a child can relate to an object--a transitional object--as he or she wishes. A transitional object allows a child to construct a relationship with reduced tension which provides freedom and creativity for further maturity.

Play and the creation of illusion continue in adult life in the forms of drama, ideals, fantasies, and religion. A person creates a psychic zone where objects and self can be controlled without much tension. A transitional object, which is actually created by one's psyche, never disappears because it is believed to be an autonomous existence. While a transitional object is projected by one's psychological state, it also helps a person to sublimate the desire to higher attainment. Therefore, the image of God is one's created image of a transitional object to which one can relate internally, as if God is externally given. The image of God is the result of a complicated process of interaction between self

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<sup>114</sup> D. W. Winnicott, Human Nature, 106.

and objects, the attainment of the ability to imagine symbols cognitively and sensorially, and the ability to create a psychological object.

If the image of God is internally related to one's experience with others, the external world will influence the formation of one's image of God. Ana-Maria Rizzuto espouses the process of constructing the image of God as a complex internal and external integrating process, unlike Freud who hypothesized the image of God as the sublimation of an unresolved oedipus complex with one's father. Rizzuto concludes,

The developmental process of forming a God representation is exceedingly complex and is influenced by a multitude of cultural, social, familial, individual phenomena ranging from the deepest biological levels of human experience to the subtlest of spiritual realizations.<sup>115</sup>

Therefore, the image of God may be assumed to be a psychological production from the constant interaction between the internal psychological world and the external world.

Even though the image of God is the psychological product of various complex relationships, the most powerful figures are parents who influence a child's mode of relationship from birth. Antoine Vergote's research on parent-child relationships and the image of God reveals that the image of God represents "a complex unity holding the two parental dimensions in tension".<sup>116</sup> Even though the image of God for a person contains both parental figures, each parental figure also embraces the other figure's characteristics.<sup>117</sup> Thus, it is difficult to conclude from certain attributions that God is male because these attributes are not solely male. Furthermore, Vergote espouses that the image of God does not have the same paternal qualities as a human father. Not only does a person

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<sup>115</sup> Ana-Maria Rizzuto, The Birth of the Living God (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 182.

<sup>116</sup> Antoine Vergote and Alvaro Tamayo, The Parental Figures and the Representation of God (New York: Mouton, 1981), 207.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

have both parental figures in tension, but actually maternal qualities are more pervasive.<sup>118</sup> Vergote also espouses that the image of God in a certain culture derives from the influence of the religious tradition, not from individual psychology.<sup>119</sup> God is the image created from various influences through the interaction between the individual and the external world. The image of God, therefore, differs from person to person. If the image of God is limited to Father, it will limit people's rich experiences with God

Not only do relationships with parental figures influence one's image of God, but one's self-esteem has a close correlation with the image of God, as shown in the research of P. L. Benson and B. P. Spilka. This research shows that a person with strong autonomy and high self-esteem has a loving image of God. A person who has low self-esteem with low self authority tends to have a rejecting or nonloving image of God, since this person demands strong intervention from God.<sup>120</sup> Nonloving has the qualities of impersonality, rigid control, and vindictiveness.<sup>121</sup> A person with low esteem may need a God to compensate for his or her low esteem. But this person cannot feel comfortable with a loving, accepting God because it is inconsistent with the view of self.

In addition to the psychological milieu, culture also provides another external element in forming the image of God. David Elkind asserts that a child starts to question life as mental capacities expand, and the image of God helps a child to have psychic equilibrium since God answers a child's quest for life beyond the finite world.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Antoine Vergote, et al., "Concept of God and Parental Images," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 8 (1969): 79-87.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>120</sup> Peter L. Benson and Bernard P. Spilka, "God-Image as a Function of Self-Esteem and Locus of Control," Current Perspectives in the Psychology of Religion, ed. H. Newton Malony (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 210.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>122</sup> Elkind, 104.

However, this process of adaptation, as with any other, is the product of interaction between subject and environment. Institutional religion in the cultural context offers a ready solution, and people tend to create an image of God while associating their psyche with a certain aspect of institutional religion.<sup>123</sup>

Even though the above hypotheses need more testing, the conclusion can be reached that:

1. A person develops a highly complex personal image of God, from one's own personal experiences of interaction with the external environment.
2. The parental images constructed by a child as primary objects strongly influence the process of constructing the image of God. However, the image of God as related to parental figures is challenged to move beyond parental figures, especially in crises which force a person to revise the image of God.
3. The personal image of God has more maternal characteristics even though paternal and maternal characteristics do not exclude each other.
4. A person will have a negative image of God if one has negative life experiences, particularly with parents, which will result in low self-esteem.
5. Institutional religion and society can provide a set of images of God related to one's personal image of God.

If this conclusion is interpreted within the context of women in patriarchy, in which a male image of God is dominant, hypotheses can be drawn from the absurd contradictions:

1. The absolute male image of God is the psychological product of males.
2. A male tries to identify his idealized maleness with his psychologically created image of God in spite of true experiences with maternal characteristics.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 109.



3. The rigid authoritative image of God results from people's experiences with their fathers in patriarchal society, which results in a man's fear of his own personal image of God as ruling, judgmental, and authoritarian.

4. Males emphasize the abstract theologized God which is alienated from a person's sensual bodily experience of God, even though the personal God is constructed through a person's whole experience of God which is powerful for one's belief system.

5. Man's low value of himself in early society, and the inner weak self as discussed in an earlier section, may thrust him to create an impersonal, rigidly controlling, and vindictive, unloving God.

6. By limiting God with their own psychologically projected metaphoric God, males limit human power to envision God as loving, empowering, and creative.

7. The male image of God in patriarchy claims an ultimate absolute image of God for all other members of the society, forcing them to internalize this controlling God.

The image of God is shaped largely by one's personal, psychological experiences. Since a person is not free from the society which provides sets of values, the image of God collectively defined in patriarchy cannot be free from the male value and the male psychological projection of his inner world. When a woman is forced to believe in this male-created God, she is confused and feels guilty if she cannot accept it fully.

#### Image of God in the Korean Mind

The traditional concept of God in the Korean mind may be distinguished in three different ways. First, as discussed in an earlier section, Han represents the ultimate reality or universal law which is immanent in every existence in the universe and which also governs the law of process. It is the abstract concept of God as the ultimate dynamic being. However, Han shapes the Korean's world-view, but does not have any anthropomorphic metaphoric images.<sup>124</sup> Rather, it becomes unconscious in the Korean

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<sup>124</sup> Heung Yun Cho, Korean Shaman (Seoul: Jung Um Sa, 1986), 94.

mind while the power of this invisible God partially transfers into other gods and goddesses which are the projection of people, as discussed above. Second, besides Father God and Mother Goddess in creation myths, there are many different gods and goddesses which actively participate in the Korean people's lives including ancestor spirits which have specific functions. Thus, these functions can be considered as the identical projection of the society. Third, besides these functional gods and goddesses, there are two female Goddesses which govern human life and death.

According to Taegon Kim's study, there are 273 gods and goddesses for Korean shamans: 63.6 percent of them are nature deities, and 33.3 percent are personified deities.<sup>125</sup> Since the shamanistic mind believes that every existence has an internal connection with the spirit of the universe, it is natural for the Korean mind to have an awe and reverence for nature. Therefore, earth, sea, water, mountains, and sky are awe provoking and are worshiped most frequently. On the other hand, because of strong ties with family members, continuity of life after death, and connectedness with every existence, the Korean shamanistic mind has created various personified metaphoric images of gods and goddesses which not only actively live the same life style as human beings, but also have supernatural powers to control human affairs. As in human society, these deities have emotional conflicts, and they become angry if the relatedness with human beings is not harmonious.<sup>126</sup>

As in most earlier forms of belief systems, ancestor worship in shamanism plays an important role from people's belief that their ancestor spirit protects and guards the descendents.<sup>127</sup> Particularly, the Confucian ethics of *hyo* and inheritance from father to son enforce ancestor worship in shamanism and became one of the cultural rituals in

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<sup>125</sup> Taegon Kim, The Study on Korean Shamanism (Seoul: Jipmundang, 1981), 287.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>127</sup> Kil Sung Choi, Ancestor Worship in Korea (Seoul: Yae Jin, 1986), 29.

Korean families. (See chapter 4.) This ancestor worship causes women to internalize the patriarchal ideology more fiercely, because if a woman has a son she can be worshiped after death instead of wandering as a lonely spirit. Therefore, *hyo* in the present life helps a woman to gain a certain status after having a son and daughter-in-law, and *hyo* in the future life guarantees proper devotion from her children, thus encouraging women to support patriarchy.

The Korean shamanistic mind does not reject diversity, while being inclusive. Moreover, the Korean shamanistic mind also values this worldly life since life in this world provides the opportunity to actualize god-given lives. Thus, the Korean shamanistic mind becomes very pragmatic, and the deities in shamanism exist for their practical purpose. If a spirit is perceived as helpful for a life, that spirit is accepted as a god or goddess from a practical point of view. Not only are gods or goddesses worshiped freely, the worship of foreign gods is not restricted. There is not any rigid gender discrimination in becoming a god or goddess. Even ancestor worship related to the strict patriarchal system allows women to become ancestor spirits other than goddesses, and this has existed from early history to the present. The most important element for becoming a god or goddess, from an historical or mythical context, is the amount of power and *han* that exists in one's life, not whether one is female or male. For the ancestor spirit, however, *han* has to be resolved for the ancestor to be a good guardian spirit for the family.

The distinctive differences between the masculine image of god and the feminine image of goddess in Samkuk Yusa is that the feminine symbol of the goddess embraces both divinity and humanity, while the masculine image of god exists either in the

transcendent realm or the concrete historical realm.<sup>128</sup> For example, myth tells us that God sends the feminine property of God to a woman, and the woman endowed with both divinity and humanity becomes one with the divine male image of god.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, femininity, which belongs to both God and human beings and is symbolized as women, is a shared property where the two realms of sacred and profane become one. Femininity is the essential property for both God and human beings. Femininity is beauty in which the only absolute perfection exists, and God desires this beauty in human beings which is actually given by God.<sup>130</sup> Because of this beauty, God cannot reject human beings, but continuously yearns for union with humans. To achieve union with God, beauty has to be shared, which means the sharing of woman herself. Therefore, a feminine goddess reveals a contradiction--the possession of beauty and the sharing of beauty for others. What follows after the sharing of the beauty in her is losing herself to death; but that is always followed by a new life--a rebirth and creation after death.<sup>131</sup> Thus, femininity is the essential condition to be a divine figure in relation to life and death. It may be the reason that the most important divine figure in Korean shamanism, which provides a new life after death, is a female goddess instead of a male god.

There is no discrimination between gods and goddesses or in becoming gods or goddesses in Korean shamansim; rather, the feminine images of goddesses are the archetypal motif of life and death. Actually, besides Han as the fundamental ethos, the

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<sup>128</sup> Taegon Kim, The Study on Korean Shamanism, 346. The feminine symbol of myths in Samkuk Yusa is manifested in two aspects. First, feminine properties are manifested in symbols intrinsically. Second, the feminine goddess has the function of priesthood. There are abundant feminine symbols which manifest feminine properties, but only the female goddesses which have the function of priesthood will be discussed. These are *Paridegi* (discarded child) and *Samsin Halmani* (grandmother of three deities) which are the most important of the goddesses in Korean shamansim.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 346.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 346.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 349.

female goddesses of Korean shamanism have the function of bringing life and death. As has been discussed, the female goddess (*Paridegi*) reveals the complicated motifs in her life journey which made her the most important goddess in Korean shamanism.<sup>132</sup> Through her sacrifice for other people, *Paridegi* attains the divine power to lead people in this world to God's other world.

Another important goddess is the goddess of new life (*Samsin Halmani*). This female goddess governs the birth of a child in the family. She gives a birth to a mother, nurtures the baby, and decides the life span of a person. *Samsin* as life goddess directly connects to the three divinities in the *Tangun* myth discussed earlier.<sup>133</sup> *Samsin* is the symbol of creation of the three divinities: the father sky God, the mother earth God, and the divine-human.<sup>134</sup> *Samsin*, therefore, is not just a functional goddess but can be explained as the representative of the union of three divinities which engender the origin of humankind as the giver of life and the creator of human society. Therefore, in Korean shamanism the female goddesses are the origin of the life, sustainers of life, and givers of the life after the death. Thus, in shamanism, the feminine symbol of goddess is freely expressed, and female goddesses have the most important functions.

The structure of the femininity of goddesses in shamanism helps us to understand the femininity in Jesus Christ. If we understand Jesus as wholly human and the God who has the power of rebirth, Jesus has to share the feminine beauty beyond the manifestation of his maleness. Feminine beauty is the absolute perfection which belongs to God and human beings. Since Jesus symbolizes the union of divinity and humanity in himself,

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<sup>132</sup> This is one of the most important myths of Korea. It is the story of a female princess who was discarded by her parents because she was female, but who became the first shaman. She is the mediator for a new life after death. The hanful life story of this *paridegi* (the name means a discarded child) is reiterated in the ritual for the dead.

<sup>133</sup> Kwang Shik Choi, "The Origin and Characteristic of *Samsin Halmani* " Journal of the Women's Problems Research Institution, [Taegu] 11 (1982): 47-57.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 6.

Jesus has to have feminine beauty. Jesus himself is the union of divine femininity and masculinity.

Feminine beauty has to be shared so that one can be as God and have the power to give life to others. The ultimate sacrifice of Jesus allows Jesus the power to be God and have the power to save other people. This is the paradox in the femininity of goddesses in shamanism which is also revealed symbolically in the life of Jesus Christ. As only female goddesses are givers of the life as mediators between divine and human beings, Jesus properties and role as a mediator between God and human beings are feminine symbols of goddesses in Korean shamanism in spite of his being male. Hence, Jesus symbolically represents the union of the femininity of the goddess and the masculinity of the god, which is the manifestation of God itself as wholeness. It may be said that this wholeness shown in Jesus including feminine spirituality--feminine divine power--is the reason why patriarchal society cannot tolerate him. Jesus has to be male inside and outside for patriarchal men to identify with themselves. Therefore, if God for the Korean shamanistic mind only discloses masculine property without the feminine, naturally there is an unconscious tendency to identify God as one of the existing functional male gods. Therefore, it is inevitable that God in Christianity becomes one of their ancestor functional gods if this presents and enforces only the male image of God. This occurrence is so unconscious and subtle that Christianity in Korea is perplexed about the phenomena of the shamanization of the church without knowing the cause.

The ultimate reality, Han, which is both immanent and transcendent, guides the whole universal creation process, containing harmony and disharmony in itself. But, the story of gods and goddesses and human beings manifests the tension and allurements among all. God and human beings share the beauty which attracts each to actively participate in the co-creation of history. Gods and goddesses have the same pain, conflict, hate, and love as human beings. Therefore, good and evil cannot be exclusive of each other. They are real manifestations of the nature of God and human beings, but the

responsibility lies in human beings for causing anger in gods or goddesses. Yet, the responsibility of human beings in shamanism is different from the ethical morality of Christianity. In shamanism the responsibility is basically a human being's obligation to live harmoniously with every existence. If there is any brokenness, it will annoy gods, goddesses, or ancestors. Hence, the unresolved *han* from unlived life in this world will cause misfortune because life has to be fully lived following the natural flow.

The ethos of Korean archaic shamanism is a life affirming world-view which endows the absolute right of every existence, and respects an existent's right to be. While Han provides God's immanence and transcendence, gods and goddesses also play important functions in Korean shamanism. There is no conflict in having both genders as divine figures. And the perception of divine figures depicts well the process of constructing a personal image of God, in this case collectively. A god's and a goddess' personality and description in shamanism are exactly the projection of this world's people. Therefore, it is important for Korean Christian women to have a gender-free image of God which has both female and male attributes, rather than reducing the image of a God into one of many gods or goddesses.

#### Image of God for Korean Christian Women

The interviewees in this research illustrate the diverse dimensions of the image of God. As Rizzuto's research shows, the process of one's image of God is complex according to one's experience in the world, particularly with one's parents.

An old woman, who talked about her image of God as father, actually had a good life in her youth with loving Christian parents. However, she described her feeling of God as mother which is contrary to the church teaching of a male God. When she shared her honest feeling about her image of God, she was reluctant to do so, but she told her feeling with a shy smile, as if confessing some kind of sin. She says,

We pray Our God, Father, but I want to tell you that my God is more like my mother. My father was a good person, but I like my mother so much. I

feel my mother when I pray to God, When I pray at night, I feel like I am in heaven.

Another woman explicates how she relates to the Virgin Mary.

I pray to the Virgin Mary. I seek Mary more than Jesus. Sometimes, I hate to see Mary with anger. I even hide her picture from time to time. How she could do nothing while watching me suffering like this . . . . I always talk to her in my heart. She is the comforter, the most powerful supporter . . . . I know God is good, but I hate God when I suffer . . . . I don't think God is like a human being. God is like mother, love. I knew God is love, but many times I doubt it.

She has been in a severely abusive relationship with her husband from the beginning of her marriage. Her suffering blocks her relationship with Mary and God. She feels close and intimate with Mary and God when she is not in trouble, but when in pain she is angry and doubts God's love. This story illustrates how the image of God is related to one's internal psychological state. Again, her story tells of the power of a personal image of God compared to the theological concept of God. The personal connectedness with Mary, who can understand her pain as a woman in a patriarchal system, empowers her to live her *hanful* life by allowing her to express her feelings honestly without the intimidation of a rigid, authoritative male God. She cannot make any connection with a male God who reminds her of her abusive husband. Her story is very significant in our patriarchal society in which so many women are abused severely every day. It tells us how women feel about a male God when they are abused constantly by their husbands. Beyond the theological argument, the Catholic maternal image of God represented in Mary allows Korean Catholic women to establish an alternative personal relationship with a maternal God, instead of with the male image of God in Protestantism.

It is obvious that ordinary believers do not think much about their belief system, systematically or theologically. As illustrated by the interview above, the most important matter is a personal relationship with a personal image of God. The woman's understanding of Mary, Jesus, and God is not clear. Mary is her strong personal image of God, and she understands God as mother's love even though her perception of God is not



limited to an anthropomorphous image. Nonetheless, she firmly identifies God with female maternal love, with a female image of God.

Two interviewees explain their perception of God.

I used to think of God as anger, but now I experience God as the God of love, the freedom of God. I cannot connect God with a parental figure at all. I just feel sympathy to my parents, that is all. God is love, grace unchangeable.

I cannot describe God well. I cannot make any connection with my own parents. It is not any parental figure, but something like a power which holds me. Whenever I sing hymns, I feel the peace and love of God with grace. I don't know exactly God and Jesus. I believe in Jesus and God. Sometimes Jesus is God, but I am not sure. It [the image] is full of love, and peace.

Both of the interviewees quoted above had painful relationships with their parents and identify their image of God beyond their own parental figures. They express the properties of their God as being beyond gender differences. The power of human beings to perceive God beyond their senses helps them to heal their *han* and move toward a creative life. Experiencing the power of God beyond their limits allows them to turn their bitter negative attitude toward life into a loving positive one.

A woman who tries to find self in many ways says,

I identify God as the most comfortable, peaceful, joyful condition of the mind. God is love, peace; above all God transcends everything. But, God is also in me. God is atman in me, and God is Atman in the universe.

This interviewee expresses her concept of God, which is transcendental and immanent. The love of God and peace exist in her, but are not limited to the human sensory image of God. What is important here is her understanding of God in reference to Atman thought in Hinduism and Buddhism. The concept of Atman and atman in Hinduism is a highly sophisticated philosophy which describes well the transcendence and immanence of the ultimate reality. It suggests that she understood her Christian God within the existing concept in her culture.

God is everywhere regardless of religious institutions . . . . God is like a pyramid in the morning fog. God never gazes its eye upon me.

She understands the God beyond the human image of God. She rejects the male God which the institution provides and is on the way to finding herself, her own identity. Her words exemplify the coincidence of her struggle for her own identity, her denial of a culture's male God, and her search for the spirituality innate in every body--the individuation process of Self in Jung's theory.<sup>135</sup> But, she still yearns for a personal relationship with God.

When they talked about the function of God, the interviewees seemed to be clear about what they know of God's help in their lives. But, in explaining God, most of them were reluctant to share their understanding. It is assumed that they do not have a clear image of God due to a lack of confidence in their experiences which are different from the church's teaching. Many of them who feel close to a maternal image of God feel guilty. Many women shared their intimate feelings of the female image of God, and the personal image of God is the God to which they can relate and from whom they can draw power, love, and strength. Nonetheless, they are confused about Jesus and God since they understand Jesus as a male God even though Jesus himself manifests feminine properties of God. Therefore, it may be concluded that some Korean Christian women's God is not the God of Christianity which is generally expressed as a male image. However, the contradictory understanding causes them to feel confusion and guilt, which blocks the stronger positive connection with God.

This study shows that the psychological process of constructing an image of God from one's complex life experiences cannot escape cultural influences. God's attributed properties in the Bible have been predominantly male due to the patriarchal societal

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<sup>135</sup> Jung's theory has been criticized by many feminist theorists due to its internal oppositionalism. See Naomi Goldenberg's work on Jung's theory and its relation to a male image of God in *Changing of the Gods* ( Boston: Beacon, 1979); and Demaris S. Wehr's work *Jung and Feminism: Liberating Archetypes* on Jung's polarity archetype theory. But, to understand Jung's theory beyond polarity, the individuation process can be applied to explain the process of maturity of a person, including spirituality. Furthermore, Jung does not limit the image of God to male. Rather he criticizes the male image of God in Christianity. See Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, vol. 7 of *CW*, 71.

background of the Bible. Moreover, Christian systematic theologies have disregarded the female attributes of God in the Bible almost completely as God became male Father, and the hierarchical patriarchal social structure was projected upon God's realm. This reinforces human patriarchal society with divine authority.

Sallie McFague argues that the metaphoric expression of the image of God has to be remythologized to be powerful enough to transform and strengthen people in today's world.<sup>136</sup> The male image of God from the past is no longer relevant for people, especially in other cultures, if a culture's understanding of the image of God is different from that of the Christian male image of God. If Christianity wants to remain as a living faith, it must have the courage to change its metaphoric image of God from male to a wholistic one in order to heal individuals, society, and the world, including the earth. Furthermore, it is necessary for Korean women who have inherited rich feminine symbols of goddesses to have an image of God which embraces both femininity and masculinity. The wholistic image of God will empower Korean women to have a healthy faith and identity. This revision of the image of God, however, is not a simple addition of female images over a male image of God. It urges the fundamental transformation of the view of Divine Reality from separatistic to wholistic and related.

People try to describe the inexplicable with metaphors and thereby seek to penetrate the depth of the meaning, since this provides a relevant frame of reference for relating to God. When people describe the image of God in anthropomorphic metaphors without allowing it to be symbolic thus making it a reality, the image cannot escape the pictorial images of concrete reality. The problem arises when a person believes in God defined as a metaphor which has limitations. Metaphor of God has to be open to further expansion for human understanding of the inexplicable; because metaphor from its intrinsic structure

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<sup>136</sup> Sallie McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 33.

has a limitation. Metaphor is an effort to understand reality, but it is not reality. If God is defined and believed as metaphor, God is limited and only exists in the human realm.

Metaphor, therefore, has to be expanded to help people understand God in depth, beyond history and culture. The metaphor of God as male in Christianity has limited both women and men's understanding of God since it provides only a limited range for God. Women, in particular, cannot easily identify themselves with a male metaphoric God who cannot understand their pain and joy of life. If God is defined as male, then a female God or Goddess has to be introduced to help people understand God more harmoniously and wholistic.

For women, the Goddess metaphor affirms women's experiences of their bodies, emotions, developmental stages, and strengths, which will empower them to vision themselves as divinely connected to God and to see their present and future life within God's realm. It will also liberate men because they will be allowed to experience the whole range of richness of human life. They can then allow femininity within themselves which is necessary for the full wholistic growth of every human being. Men do not have to build unnecessary defense systems to identify themselves as the powerful, ordained by Almighty God. Therefore, the validation of female experiences and female properties in God would enhance the human community's growth toward wholeness.

### Conclusion

Spirituality lays the foundation for human existence. It encompasses every dimension of human life as the core of one's life. Spirituality opens the possibility for union with a God whose power spreads like a ripple, expanding over one's life radius. A person in the continuum of history is born with a collective spirituality from one's cultural history and from an existing community. Hence, spirituality is both an individual and collective experience for a human being.

The world-view in shamanism has been a collective spiritual ethos of the Korean people and it still exists in the community. It is a dynamic force in process. It has

permeated people, shaping them with a distinctive characteristic from its world-view. Because of respect for the intrinsic value of every existence, there is no value judgment against others. There is a deep reverence for living life which is the embodiment of God's divine power, and a reverence for nature which sustains life. There is no separatistic view between the material and the spiritual. Happiness is promoting goodness in every life to achieve humanity, which is the manifestation of God's goodness.

Korean shamanism is both individual and communal. Often the union with God is celebrated communally, as well as privately. Union with God calls for the participation of the whole being: singing, dancing, drinking, and eating. The ritual which provides a union with God is a festival of celebrating life. Because of the life affirming thrust in the experience of God, if there is any brokenness in relatedness or harmony, the dynamic energy tries to restore the brokenness. Therefore, spirituality seeks the improvement of humanity within the community, as well as within individuals.

But this wholistic, life affirming world-view has been distorted and repressed by the patriarchal ideology of separatism and value judgment. It becomes a forgotten memory. While Korean society has become patriarchal, shamanism has been oppressed and lost its original vision of an existential mode of being. It has become a privatized individual belief system, losing its essence of being communal and political. Nonetheless, Korean women who experience their life as connected to the earth and to the ultimate being in their deepest souls, have kept this spirituality. Korean women who have no space within the society can only affirm their soul in the spiritual dimension through a forced denial of their reality.

Shamanism has become the *hanful* Korean women's religion, a religion for the most powerless group of the society. Shamanism has relieved Korean women's *han* throughout their history, but the very positive function of relieving pain has helped Korean women adjust to the system without helping them to be aware of their reality. As is often true of women's psychological conditions, Korean women and their spirituality have become numb to social conditions.

Christianity enforces the patriarchy embedded in Korean Christianity from its own patriarchal background. Thus, the good news of God cannot be good news for Korean women. Instead of nurturing and empowering women to live in God's freedom, it binds women more tightly by the authority of divine male power. Hence, the function of Christianity has become that of shamanism--the narrow spirituality of familialism. It only perpetuates women's obedience to a male God.

Shamanism provides abundant feminine symbols in Korean women's minds, consciously and unconsciously. But Protestant Christianity prohibits any feminine symbol in the metaphorical image of God. If Korean women have a different view or understanding of Christianity, it provokes more guilt because their whole experience of God is different from what they learn in the church. The male image of God is only a psychologically created, metaphoric image of God which limits God's freedom by oppressing one half of humanity. Hence, the male image of God in Christianity cannot point to reality being only a psychologically projected creation.

To help Korean women to deal with their *hanful* life, it is necessary to reflect critically on the root of their *han*, the spiritual dimension, which is the most fundamental one. The history which has been distorted due to patriarchy has to be reconstructed to understand the root of the Korean people's ethos. Therefore, for Korean Christianity, it is of the utmost importance to try to find the connecting point which will enhance both the Christian gospel and Korean culture without negating either. Accepting one's self is the first step in integrating one's continuing life experiences--expanding one's understanding of the meaning of life, the aspirations of humankind, and the ultimate love of God.

For the task, Korean Christian women have the ability and the responsibility to reconstruct Korean theology because they are the ones who exist on the boundaries: the boundary between God's world and the human natural world; the boundary between their own soul rooted in their soil and the newly received Christian gospel; and the boundary between being (as human) and non-being. They are the ones who can provide a realm in

themselves for the union of divinity and humanity which will open God's realm to the whole community. Women can exist both in this world and in God's world with dignity as divine-humans without negating either dimension. Once again, women's sacrifice is called for, but this sacrifice is not a blind one as in the past. It is for rebirth--the rebirth of self and others.

## CHAPTER 7

### Contextualized Healing Methodology for Korean Women's *Han*

The archaic Korean shamanistic world-view is to live harmoniously, following the life force within the universe. Every existence, either living or non-living, is connected as are blood vessels in the body. As any blockage in a blood vessel causes illness in the body, any blockage in connectedness among existences causes the destruction of human beings and the whole planet as is evident in the present, critical situation concerning the earth's survival.

The manifestation of this blockage is perceived as *han* in the Korean mind, and retrieving the original state from *han* is called *pulida* (풀리다) in the Korean language. *Pulida* means "disentangle the knotted, loose, resolve, realizing one's desire, melts one's anger, clear misunderstanding, warms up body or weather, recover from tension and fatigue, or give birth."<sup>1</sup> It pertains to the many dimensions of the natural flow--one's original way of being when free from unnatural blockages. The process of *pulida* involves creating a new life, healing pain, transforming one state into another, consorting, and sharing one's heart through empathy.<sup>2</sup> It is a hope for human struggle, and a new vision for life.<sup>3</sup> Yul Kyu Kim articulates,

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<sup>1</sup> "Pulida," Hangul Sajun [Korean Dictionary] (Seoul: *Hangul Hakhoe*, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Kil Sung Choi, Hankook Musokeui Yunkoo [The Study on Korean Shamanism] (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1978), 274-78. In the last stage of the ritual of the dead, called *Kopuri* (loosening of the knots), a shaman loosens the knotted strings which symbolically frees the dead spirit to the other world by resolving the *han*.

<sup>3</sup> Yul Kyu Kim, Hankookin. Ku' Mau'mui Ku'nwonul Chanunda [The Korean: Search for the Root of Mind] (Seoul: Munhak Sasangsa, 1987), 1-2.



*Pulim* [ 풀림 , =noun of *pulida* ] is liberation, and there is no doubt that it is ultimate freedom. From the beginning, it is spiritual. It is the inevitable growth of mind and spirit. We call the ultimate *pulim* of liberation and freedom the self expansion from one's core self, to the self's cosmization--the cosmization of my spirit in the universe.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, healing *han*, *hanpuri* (한풀이 , =*han* + *puri* [another noun form of *pulida* ]), is liberation from the oppression which is caused by broken relatedness. It is the process of reweaving differences, disharmony, and disorder into God's harmony through reconciliation. Healing for Korean women's *han*, then, is reconnecting the brokenness within self, people, community, nature, and the Divine.<sup>5</sup>

For Korean women's *hanpuri* to occur, the following aspects have to be considered. First, it is necessary to understand the existing traditional healing system of Korean culture to enhance the healing of *han* since, without entering into a people's way of structuring their world experience, healing can hardly occur. Secondly, the presence of spirituality in healing has to be remembered. The Korean people's *han* and spirituality in the archaic shamanistic world-view have been closely intertwined, since shamanism, as a belief system and a cultural pattern, has helped Korean women to heal their wounds. Therefore, the spirituality in shamanism and Christianity, especially in the counseling context, will be reviewed to understand the role of spirituality in healing. Thirdly, the integration of both traditional and newly emerging methods is necessary for the effective healing of *han*. This requires a critical review of the shamanistic traditional healing system, as well as Western-developed psychotherapeutic methodology, from a feminist perspective. Finally, a theological reflection on Korean women's *han* will be presented to elucidate a relevant theology for Korean women's experiences. This reflection is essential because

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 39. Translated by the researcher.

<sup>5</sup> As discussed in chapter 6, in Korean shamanism the healing has to occur in every dimension including nature. In patriarchy, particularly in Christianity, nature and woman are dominated. Therefore, healing is liberation of all oppressed including nature. See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *New Woman/New Earth* (Minneapolis: Seabury, 1975), 186 for a discussion of the gradual process of the domination of woman and nature in Christianity.

healing aims for wholeness which embraces every dimension of a person's life, especially a person's understanding of the Ultimate.

The purpose of this chapter is to unfold a new possibility for the healing of Korean women's *han* so that they can envision a new life in God's realm.

### Traditional Healing Methodology for Korean Women's *Han*

The healing power of shamanism lies in the shamans' spiritual power in ritual. In early Korean society, life, death, labor and the production of crops were all seen as related to the divine. A good harvest meant a blessing from living in a good harmonious relationship with the Divine, people, and the earth. Through collective ritual, any disharmony with the Divine, people, or nature was restored. A happy life in this world was possible through being in the right place in the process of creation. Also, an individual tried to solicit the Divine for protection, happiness, and the answers for life and death, especially in crises.

The individual ritual in Korean shamanism has survived in spite of severe suppression by society. Being marginal, both Korean shamanism and Korean women have been inseparable while supporting each other. But the communal ritual, which consolidated community cohesion and power, has remained only as a sporadic event for rural or sea villages in regard to harvest. Its dynamic power has been diminished, partially because of its innate structure which confronts the powerful ruling class. Hence, even though individual rituals in Korean shamanism have helped mainly Korean women to relieve their *han*, it is also important to discern the nature of the collective ritual to have a wholistic understanding of how Korean shamanism, as an ethos, has helped the community as well. In shamanism and its rituals, one of the most important elements lies in the shaman's ability to mediate between people and God. Therefore, in addition to the study of the individual and collective rituals, the initiation process to become a shaman and

the shaman's role as a mediator will also be discussed with reference to the healing process.<sup>6</sup>

### Wounded Healer in Korean Shamanism

The function of a Korean woman shaman in early society was not limited to healing. Her function was as a priest, medicine woman, prophet, art performer, and divine messenger. She healed a sick person usually through ritual, but also through accumulated wisdom from folk healing methods. She also had a prophetic function to tell the future of the people and the nation, and sometimes women shamans were persecuted because of prophecies which aggravated rulers.<sup>7</sup> Performing rituals learned through practice enabled them to inherit the traditional art and to become art performers. But the most important function was the shamans' ability to communicate with the divine spirit to mediate between people and the divine.<sup>8</sup> Thus, they helped the community and individuals to: have psychiatric integrity; believe in the continuation of life through the rebirth experience in ritual; have a patterned and inherited traditional belief system; and see the other transcendental world.<sup>9</sup>

Most shamans in Korea have been women who have experienced severe conflicts and embedded *han*. When a person experiences severe conflictual *han* which confronts the fundamental meaning of existence, one consciously or unconsciously quests for a spiritual dimension of life. This conflict causes psychological and physical sickness. The first symptom of *sinbyung* (sin=god, byung=illness, 신 병) is usually the setting in of a

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<sup>6</sup> There are two types of shamans in Korea: one is hereditary and the other is possessed. Since a hereditary shaman practices the priesthood through acquired learning without spiritual power, the possessed shaman who has the spiritual power will be dealt with mainly in this study. See Taegon Kim, The Study on Korean Shamanism, 141-49.

<sup>7</sup> Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 209.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 209-12.

<sup>9</sup> Eliade, Shamanism, 509-11.

physical sickness without any known cause.<sup>10</sup> It can be a psychological madness, a sudden illness, or a hallucination occurring in a dream or during the day which leads a person to severe, unbearable pain to the point of a death-like state.<sup>11</sup> These symptoms can be healed only through an initiation ritual in which a person accepts the call from her or his own personal god or goddess to be a shaman.<sup>12</sup> Healing is possible only through painful self-surrender and the sacrifice of one's life, as in any other religious conversion experience.<sup>13</sup> This is the process of becoming a new self through rebirth and the process of restructuring values with a new system of meaning.

Mircea Eliade explicates this process as an initiatory illness which is necessary for the attainment of spiritual power, and results after recovery from surrendering oneself to a calling. Van Gennep divides the process into three stages: a separation from the profane world; an initiatory ordeal as the transitional period from profane to sacred; and incorporation of sacred and profane, through initiation, to be one with a god or goddess.<sup>14</sup> On the verge of death in this world, a woman resolves her *han* of alienation and oppression through initiation, and becomes powerful through union with the divine. With her power,

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<sup>10</sup> From this sickness a shaman gains the extraordinary power to be in both domains: this world and the other world. It can be explained that a shaman has power to be beyond the boundary between this world and the other world. Psychologically speaking, it is breaking the boundary of self constructed in the world. To be in touch with the Divine is to be in touch with one's inner self, which is connected to the Divine. This occurrence can be observed in shamans in other culture. See Rita Nakashima Brock, "On Mirrors, Mists, and Murmurs," *Weaving the Visions*, eds., Judith Plaskow and Carol Christ, 241. See also an explanation of ecstasy in shamanism in Rowena Pattee, "Ecstasy and Sacrifice," *Shaman's Path*, ed. Gary Doore (Boston: Shambhala, 1988), 22-23.

<sup>11</sup> Taegon Kim, *The Study on Korean Shamanism*, 196-228. This study illustrates several cases of initiatory illness and ordeal in detail.

<sup>12</sup> Augsburger, 307. The chart on this page is helpful to diagnose the differences between initiation sicknesses and psychological disturbances.

<sup>13</sup> It has to be noted that the self in self-surrender has to be understood differently for male and female, as discussed earlier, due to the different perception of and construction process for self between male and female.

<sup>14</sup> See Arnold von Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); and Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiations* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 87-88.

she becomes a comforter who can facilitate the resolving of other wounded people's *han*. In ritual, with this power a shaman can create a space, a sacred space, in which people and the Divine can be one.<sup>15</sup> A Korean woman shaman also provides people with a sacred realm of God in which to release their *han*, heal the brokenness, and have new energy for life.

Even though a shaman helps people to overcome everyday life struggles, providing them with comfort from divine power, she holds the lowest position in society as a woman and as a possessed. Possessed with extraordinary power, she makes people feel awe and fear which forces them to draw boundary lines to feel comfortable. Therefore, she accepts the call to be a shaman to avoid death from *sinbyung*. Sometimes a person chooses to die instead of accepting the call because she does not want to degrade herself and her family, or to be alienated from the community. Thus, being called by a god or goddess is considered an inevitable fate for these god-called women. The call cannot be avoided but must be accepted. A shaman's suffering through the initiation illness and her continuous alienation and suffering as the lowest class helps her to be humble enough to care for other persons' pain and suffering, rather than claiming spiritual authority over people. She also can perceive the contradictions in the society through her own self-awareness of being marginal.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to her low status in ordinary life, in ritual a shaman becomes a divine figure. This reversed status enables her to ridicule the contradictions of the society or dysfunctions in the consulting person's family. It is a particularly important function in Korea since it is very difficult to discuss family issues outside the family. But in ritual, a shaman can name the problems of the family without putting shame upon them. In addition

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<sup>15</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism*, 89.

<sup>16</sup> See Youngsook Kim Harvey, *Six Korean Women*. The study shows the detailed social backgrounds and life struggles of six Korean women shamans.

to this divine mediator role, a shaman sometimes examines a person's family situation, and orders the consulting person and their family to restructure the family system by scolding, educating, or preaching to family members about the importance of harmony and the value of the family. A shaman helps people to see a dysfunctional family structure and to gain insight for an alternate frame of reference in their thinking and behavior. Thus, a shaman becomes an educator, preacher, and an experienced family systems counselor. A shaman, as a representative of God, can scold virtually anyone. If there is any discomfort in relationships among community members, a shaman who already knows this confronts conflicting members as a divine person. Therefore, long repressed feelings among community members are released. This process enables a consulting person, family member, or community members to loosen up the entangled emotions so that healing and improvement of relationships can occur.

With all these gifts, Korean women shamans have helped Korean women to survive their lives by performing rituals or suggesting answers that would help wounded women see some hope beyond their present reality.

#### Ritual in Korean Shamanism for Healing Korean Women's *Han*

The shaman's religious ritual, *kut* ( kut ), has provided healing treatments for people's various needs, but also has been carried on as a total form of art which has been the expression of the conflict of life and human yearning for God's paradigmatic answer.<sup>17</sup> In early history, the people's view of life was sacred without a distinctive separation between sacred and profane. However, as the religious class and political power became separated due to the society's complex structure, the shaman ritual became differentiated according to its purpose.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Yun Ho Suh, "The Principle and Structure of Korean Shaman Play," A Study on Korean Shamanism, ed. Inhoe Kim, 234. This article explores the different opinions about the relevant connection between shamanism's ritual and the folk custom of festival drama.

<sup>18</sup> Tong Shik Ryu, "Religious Characteristics of Korean Shamanism," A Study on Korean Shamanism, ed. Inhoe Kim, 133. Ryu explicates that the period of differentiation of an individual ritual

The ritual, *kut*, has been separated largely into three categories. One is held strictly for shamans themselves to regularly renew their spirituality at the beginning of each year.<sup>19</sup> In addition, there are two kinds of rituals for people: one for the individual and one for the community.<sup>20</sup> The ritual for the individual usually is held for various personal needs such as a wish for a new baby, long life, health, good fortune, good life after death, and for various special purposes. The ritual for community is for the community's welfare and protection from uncontrollable, external malevolent power.<sup>21</sup> But the community ritual is divided further into two kinds: one for religious purposes, and the other as a folk art festival. Again, the folk art festival is divided into two parts: one for collective communal labor, *ture* (투리), and the other for the communal expression of life shown in the *minjung's* art forms such as *talchum* (탈춤, *tal*=mask, *chum*=dance) and *nori* (놀이, =play), which includes various styles of drama, singing, dancing, and lyrics.<sup>22</sup>

There are three stages in shaman rituals. They are the invocation of God as the initial stage, union with God as ecstasy, and the sending off of God as the last stage of

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from a communal one occurred around the ninth century, since the origin of the story of Korean women shamans is during this period.

<sup>19</sup> Taegon Kim, The Study on Korean Shamanism, 347.

<sup>20</sup> Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 71-75. Ryu explicates the development of shamanism into three types: (1) development of the *yang* dimension of shamanism into the male sky-God which is largely transmitted through community ritual; (2) development of the *yin* dimension of shamanism into the mother-earth Goddess which is mainly inherited by a female-centered individual shaman's ritual; and (3) development of shamanism through the assimilation of yin and yang which has been manifested in the assimilation of shamanism with other religions.

<sup>21</sup> Taegon Kim, The Study on Korean Shamanism, 354-55. Also refer to Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 293. Ryu categorized the ritual into three parts: ritual to ask for blessing, ritual for healing, and ritual for the dead. See also Ryu, "Religious Characteristics of Korean Shamanism," A Study on Korean Shamanism, ed. Inhoe Kim, 134, for further detailed categorization.

<sup>22</sup> See Hyun-joo Kang, "Community and Community Ritual: A Study on *Ture kut*," Minjokkwa Kut [People and Exorcism], ed. Minjok Kut Society (Seoul: Hakminsa, 1987) for a detailed discussion. See also Inhoe Kim, ed. A Study on Korean Shamanism, 237. There are arguments about whether the *minjung's* folk art festival can be considered a religious ritual, but the underlying structure is fundamentally religious as derived from the shaman's ritual.

separation between sacred and secular. In each stage there are a number of small acts.<sup>23</sup> However, the authentic characteristic of Korean shamanism is the state of union with God. In Korean shamanism, union with God is the celebration of life, and a celebration of restoring the relationship between God and human beings. In ecstasy, people and God enjoy each other while singing, dancing, and drinking. It is the moment of affirming the life of the people by God, and human beings respond to God with joy. Ecstasy is the joyful exuberant feeling from being one with God.<sup>24</sup>

Those who view the folk art festival as shamanistic ritual see the connecting point between the two as *nori* (놀이, =play with joyful excitement) which is the expression of ecstasy--the chaos of new order from union with the Divine,<sup>25</sup> since *nori* is a main element in Korean shamanism and also in the communal ritual, including the folk festival.<sup>26</sup> Dancing and singing in *nori* are the fundamental elements in experiencing ecstasy, and it is experienced individually and collectively.

In *kut* (sometimes also called *kutnori*, 굿놀이), a shaman as an actor and director effectively controls psychological emotional dynamics. A shaman plays with God, leading the audience to participate in the *nori* as a whole, and the participating audience watches the shaman's *nori* and sometimes also play with God. There are no boundaries between God, shaman, and the participating audience, which means going back to the original

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<sup>23</sup> Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 224-26.

<sup>24</sup> In Korean shamanism, ecstasy also reveals the liberation of repressed sexuality. In shamanism, sexual expression or gender discrimination does not exist, since in this world-view sexuality is the sacred power of creation unlike the view of Christianity. See Susan Griffin, Pornography and Silence, for a distinction between sexuality and Eros.

Starhawk also describes ecstasy as "divine ecstasy which becomes the fountain of creation, and creation is an orgasmic process." It is "the sharing in the primal, throbbing joy of union." Starhawk, The Spiral Dance (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 25.

<sup>25</sup> Yul Kyu Kim, "Korean Shamanism and Folk Custom," 68.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 135. See also Ryu, Structure and History of Korean Shamanism, 323; and Inhoe Kim, The Study on Korean Shamanism, 249.



harmonious relatedness of God's creation in both individual and communal ritual. The place and the people become sacred, and this sacredness has a contagious power which spreads throughout the community.

Through this ritual, status and class which were created from the destruction of God's divine relatedness among existences disappears, and the whole community becomes one. In this ritual everyone, regardless of their status, has the freedom and the right to express their feelings without any restriction, and this freedom allows people to experience their right to be human once more. Thus, *pulim* is possible through *nori* in individual and communal rituals and in folk art festivals.

The traditional healing methodology is rooted in both individual and communal ritual forms which emerge from a shamanistic world-view, even though more often people consider the individual ritual as the shaman's healing role for wounded people. But the communal ritual is also important, as it renews the whole society and allows it to overcome its burdens. From this perspective, the dynamics of the two types of ritual will be reviewed to attain an insight for healing Korean women's *han*.

Individual Ritual. Generally, individual rituals are held regularly according to the seasons and for some specific purposes such as safety, happiness, and prosperity for family members (which is done both for the living and the dead). When a misfortune or disease breaks out, a woman visits a shaman for consultation. If the problem is not severe, the consultation is good enough to console the distressed woman. But if the situation is serious, then a certain kind of ritual is recommended by a shaman.

The therapeutic process of individual consultation in shamanism starts even before the consultation. In a shaman's room, other people are waiting for consultations, and usually there is no privacy or confidentiality in the process. More often, consultations are held in open spaces with other people present. Among the people who are waiting, group consultation starts with sharing problems and sometimes helpful answers are given by another waiting person. Not only does each person try to help others with some kind of

comfort or answer, but the exchange of information is important for insights or building trust in the shaman since the credibility of the shaman is often discussed.

While hearing another woman's consultation with a shaman, women identify their problems with that of the consulting woman. They can compare their pains and burdens with other person's suffering, which sometimes relieves their anxiety about their own problems. People have a tendency to absolutize their pain, but hearing another's problem relativizes their problem and gives them a more objective stance. Therefore, individual consultation is not always individual, but rather it tends to be supportive group therapy. Furthermore, the tense consultative process between a shaman and the consulting person, God's presence in the interpretation of the problem, and the intervention of God in human affairs raises high expectations and a feeling of awe among the group. Faith and high expectation facilitate the process of healing.

At the beginning, a shaman questions the consulting person's family background, usually asking the family name and birth date. In a brief period of time, a shaman finds the cause of the problem. If a shaman accurately suggests the cause of the problem, the trust of the consulting person is heightened. Problems are usually interpreted as caused by the distress of an ancestor soul, the displeasure of a god or goddess due to their uneasiness with a person or family, and their interference of deities in the life of a person or family. Actually, a consulting person is ready to give full answers to a shaman based on certain questions, so that the shaman who is charismatic and sensitive can grasp the feelings of the consulting person.

The diagnostic process involves the shaman naming the causes of problems--causes which a consulting person already knows unconsciously. Unknowing provokes anxiety because it leaves people helpless; but naming the cause and explaining the treatment can immediately begin to resolve inner conflicts, since this gives one a sense of power to control the problems. Also, unlike a medical doctor, a shaman more often hears the whole painful story of a person from early life to the present. This helps a consulting person to

release *han* without the pressures of time and the authority of a modern medical doctor. There are no rigid boundaries or status differences between a female shaman and a consulting woman since they share Korean women's *han*.

The prognostication by a shaman is another important element in the healing process. After having the cause of a problem identified by divine prophetic power, a consulting person willingly trusts the words of a shaman. After prognostication, a shaman treats the cause with the proper ritual without an analytical explanation. The consulting person and family members are released from their anxiety by being assured of healing; this release impacts the progress of healing. Kwang-il Kim claims that the possibility of a shaman's treating a person of some psychogenic disorders such as psychoneurosis, psychosomatic disease, and schizophrenia lies in comforting the distressed person.<sup>27</sup> If a person has faith in the ritual, then anxiety-neurosis, hysteria, and psychosomatic disorders are treated effectively.<sup>28</sup> The psychological mechanism in healing involves prognostication, catharsis, abreaction, persuasion, and transference.<sup>29</sup>

The Korean people's focus on relationships, especially with ancestors, shapes their view of life after death. They project their lifestyle and feelings to the spirits in the other world. They fear broken relationships with ancestors and with family members, which will irritate the ancestor spirits, since the most important value of the society is the continuation of the family with happiness and prosperity. Therefore, they consider ill fortune or disease as their ancestors' anger toward their ill-behavior and the broken relationships with other members or the ancestor spirit.

In most rituals, there are stages for the ancestor spirit. During a ritual the shaman plays the role of both spirit and descendent. The ancestor spirit intervenes in the

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<sup>27</sup> Kwang-il Kim, "Kut and the Treatment of Mental Disorder," *Shamanism*, eds. Yu and Guisso, 141.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

descendents' lives, and a shaman interprets the reason why that spirit has come to bother the children. Then a shaman pleads with the ancestor spirit, representing the children, and asks for pardon by placating them, or sometimes confronting them. This leads both the ancestor spirit and the descendents to reconciliation by restoring the broken relatedness. The finale includes comforting words and the assurance by the spirit that the spirit will take good care of the family. In this process a guilty feeling can be released without the need to penetrate the reason, because the cause is projected to the ancestor spirit.<sup>30</sup>

In a ritual for the dead, a shaman provides a significant space where the dead soul and the survivors meet to share unfinished feelings. This actually helps survivors to release their complicated, unfinished feelings at the loss of a family member. During the ritual, a shaman becomes the dead person's soul in order to share the *hanful* life story of the deceased, her or his sad fate in dying, their care for family members, their unfinished feelings of discomfort toward the rest of the family members, and their broken wishes and hopes in life. After sharing all of these *han*, the ritual eventually leads to the dead person's honest blessing for the family and her or his promise to take good care of the family members. This ritual, called *Chinogi kut*, is the paradigmatic *hanful* story of the Korean ethos and a symbolic ritual for the separation, which is unavoidable for finite human beings. The ritual is a wish for a good life for the dead and the affirmation of unbreakable bonds of care and love between family members. The *paridegi* myth is reiterated in this ritual with a symbolic ceremony of separation which involves tearing a long white linen in half. It means symbolically the acknowledgement and acceptance of two different journeys for the dead and the surviving family members. It helps surviving family members to be sure of a safe and good life for the dead, and heals the *han* in their hearts due to separation. They can resolve their grief only after taking good care of the dead person's soul. The ritual helps people to work with the grief issue openly and to deal with the life and death issue

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<sup>30</sup> Yul Kyu Kim, *The Korean: Search for the Root of Mind*, 69.

without denying the death. In the ritual, people can grasp the fact that the ultimate answer for the human struggle lies in God's realm.

Individual rituals have played a function of psychotherapy for Korean women throughout their history. The process involves spirituality and psychotherapeutic skills but, nonetheless, shamanism fails to keep Korean women conscientized enough to confront the reality which oppresses them.<sup>31</sup>

Community Ritual. Community ritual also has an important function in Korean traditional society. People hold rituals for the community's safety and protection, and also for a good harvest. Fertility rituals are held according to the seasonal agricultural calendar. These community rituals have the same internal structure as individual ritual and include the invocation of God, union with God, and the sending off of God after the ecstasy which assures them of fertility. All of these rituals emerge from the Korean shamanistic world-view of relatedness and harmony within the natural world. While individual shamanistic rituals are mainly for reconciliation of family members and ancestor spirits, community shamanistic rituals promote healing among the community members, nature, and God. There is also a ritual for collective labor to prepare for the new year's crop.

While the religious community ritual has a similar process to the individual religious ritual, the community ritual for cooperative labor takes its authentic character from the fact that it is a voluntary grass-roots ritual for a common purpose and goal.<sup>32</sup> While the individual ritual depends heavily on the shaman's spiritual power through possession of the soul, the ritual leader in both types of community rituals is selected by community members either from ordinary persons or from an inherited shaman priest.<sup>33</sup> In both types of

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<sup>31</sup> A shaman's individual counseling process is not one of empowering Korean women or helping them to have insights. However, Michael Harner suggests a revised form of shamanic counseling which helps the clients themselves to become counselors so that they can claim their own power to face their problems. See Michael Harner, "Shamanic Counseling," Shaman's Path, 179.

<sup>32</sup> Hyun-joo Kang, 48.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 58.

community rituals, the initiators are community members, and the energy from community members is transferred to a selected person as a representative of the people. Then the person experiences the spiritual power of a divine god, and that power spreads to other community members.<sup>34</sup> The union of cooperative labor--systematized power--confronts and recovers the separated connectedness in God's divine harmonious order. The people believe that unless harmony and relatedness are recovered through ritual, fertility will not be guaranteed since labor, laborer, and production belong to God's sacred realm.

Community ritual is a democratic political process, originating in the Korean shamanistic world-view and the Korean people's mind. The process does not recognize a separate power class as the ultimate way of life. Also, the process values women as persons who can procreate as God created the world, and their fertile powers are not despised or degraded, but respected with awe. In ritual, women participate actively with their symbolic power of fertility, and the whole community participates in the ritual and exhaustively enjoys *nori* (ecstasy).<sup>35</sup> This dynamic power in the community ritual can help to release the repressed feelings, *han*, of society, so that once more people can sustain their lives in spite of oppression. Nonetheless, as in individual rituals, a transformation of the social structure is rarely accomplished.

Community ritual also includes a theatrical form which has the inner structure of a shamanistic ritual, and yet has strong theatrical characteristics.<sup>36</sup> There are roughly three different kinds of this theatrical form: a shaman's play, a puppet play, and a mask play. A shaman's play is a narrative drama by a shaman with participants; a puppet play is a narrative play between puppet players and musicians; and a mask play is a narration of

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>35</sup> In Woo Kim, "*Pungmul* Kut and Communal *Sinbyung*," in *Minjok kwa Kut*, 113.

<sup>36</sup> See Yun Ho Suh. Refer to page 263 for a detailed categorization of these types of play.

poems, songs, dances, and conversations among actors.<sup>37</sup> The content of all these dramas is the conflict of life and the transformation of a human being in the divine world through *nori*.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the play is the repetition of God's drama in a profane world. The experience of transcendence is possible through the resolution of conflicts, which is only possible in God's realm.

Tong Shik Ryu, in particular, argues that *talchum* is the most typical shamanistic ritual and reveals the inner core structure of religious ritual in shamanism. He says,

The artistic crystalization of *kut nori* is *talchum*. [Wearing] *Tal* (Mask) is the negation of the ordinary self, and helps one to be other than oneself. An actor can identify her or himself with the symbol of mask . . . . The mask opens a possibility for impossibility. The dualistic conflict can be transcended through the mask. *Chum* (Dance) allows a human being to stand in front of God, and dance and music even persuades spirits. Thus, *talchum* (mask dance) is the sublimation of *kut* through *nori*.<sup>39</sup>

One of the most outstanding mask dances is *Pongsan Talchum*, which also has a shamanistic world-view as an inner structure.

The *Pongsan Talchum* consists of eleven scenes, and five scenes are related to three main stories: an old monk, the ruling class elite, and a husband who deserted his wife. Fundamentally, the play is a satirical criticism of hierarchical, patriarchal Korean society. The first three acts of this mask dance reveal the wholistic shamanistic world-view. It is performed by several people reiterating narrative poems with music and dance. The first scene opens with bowing to four directional gods which indicates that the space becomes sacred.<sup>40</sup> Acts 1, 2, and 3 depict the beauty of nature, the beauty of seasonal changes in

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>39</sup> *Tal* means mask, *chum* means dance, and therefore *talchum* means mask-dance which originated early in Korean history. It is an annual festival held at the beginning of the lunar year, but it is also held just before the grain planting. Usually it starts at full moon. There are different kinds of *talchum*, but *Pongsan Talchum* is the most famous one.

<sup>40</sup> Trans. and edited by Oh-Kon Cho, "*Pongsan Talchum*," *Traditional Korean Theater* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988), 215.

nature and the infinite continuity of nature, human existence in nature, and emptiness from the finitude of life. But the prelude claims a human being's existential condition as a libertine, a free being, who must be in harmonious union with God, nature, and other human beings. The ritual presupposes that, with music and dance--which lures a person into ultimate harmony--a person can be in a divine state to participate in God's creation through ecstasy by having fun in *nori*.

Not only *talchum* (mask dance), but also *talnori* (mask play) advocates that to be in God's world a person has to be honest, as in a state of nakedness, which means being natural as originally created by God.<sup>41</sup> And it also claims that sex is not to be negated, but is considered a divine act in order to become one in ecstasy with God. There is no separateness between God, nature, and human beings, and also no split between body and spirit. Therefore, there has to be feminine divine power, which is a saving spirit for a person symbolically male in the world--a person who has lost any meaning in life. A person leaves behind the secular world and goes back to nature, where his lover is. The poem from this portion of the play is recited,

The elegant figure of a young maiden,  
In my vision, still lingers,  
While, in my ear, her voice rings,  
I'm praying.  
I'm praying for supplication.  
.....  
If I take her, it must be a preordained tie.  
If I leave her, it's a mutual love.  
Mutual love and separation.  
When I reincarnate as a butterfly  
I'll fly back and forth to her garden.<sup>42</sup>

This poem, in the mask dance play *Pongsan Talchum*, depicts the spirituality of Korean people who yearn for union with Mother Nature--a desire for union with feminine spirituality to achieve a wholistic, divine harmony. But the union with feminine spirituality

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 235.



is not binding through a preordained tie, and it leaves room for each to be free to have mutual love. It reveals the necessary core essence of mutual love: Dependency is needed as the loving bond, yet autonomy is necessary for interdependent mutual love.

In Act 4, the scene criticizes institutional Buddhism in a cynical manner by showing an old actor monk who is lured by a young girl's beauty. The opinion can be expressed that the poem in this act is a revolting one about an established religion and a yearning for female beauty, the inner spirituality of shamanism. Also, the old monk has to give up the young female to a young unsophisticated man with whom the young girl becomes pregnant and gives birth. In the poem the young girl, symbolic of feminine spirituality, is there always with the embracing power to create, but the man has to be renewed to be fertile. The interpretation can be given that the play symbolically means not only that fertility has to be increased for the coming harvest year by replacing the old with new vitality, but also that the play emphasizes the importance of feminine spirituality and the lost vitality of an institutionalized religion.

In Act 6, a lower-class man ridicules the elite with satirical sexual jokes about their arrogant disguise, and he claims to have engaged in sexual activity with their wives. The symbolic meaning is that spirituality in natural state and life energy is vital in marginal people but is absent in the upper class, powerful group. In the last and the longest act, the absurd male selfishness in Korean patriarchy is satirically criticized. The length of the act, which consists of the life story of a married couple, makes it a separate drama, complete within itself.

This act consists of the conversation between a husband and a wife, but the theme is the husband's cruelty to his wife and the wife's contempt of her husband's selfish acts. However, at the end she fights with his concubine and dies. Thus, even though the woman does her best for her husband and family, in the end she suffers from her husband's cruelty and infidelity, which psychologically and physically drives her to her death. She revolts with fervent anger against the injustice done to her by her husband,

which reveals Korean women's unspoken revolting voice even under severe oppression. But the fight with the concubine and the wife's death reveal that there is no success in the struggle against the victimization of women. Even though few scholars have delved into the structure from a woman's perspective, *Pongsan Talchum* can be considered a creative work of Korean women's collective *han* for the purpose of Korean women's liberation. However, this play shows again the defeat of women in a patriarchal society.

Thus, *talchum* starts with the natural harmony between God and all creatures and the human yearning for feminine spirituality which all embrace in their hearts. But ironically, the social structure kills the woman who symbolizes feminine spirituality, the spirituality which is essential for human wholeness in order for mortal human beings to belong to the divine realm. It is the critical collective reflection of a patriarchal society which brings forth sexual discrimination, patriarchal religious institutions, elite bureaucratic classism, and separation from nature and God.

The play shows that the absurdity, discrepancy, injustice, and brokenness of the society can be restored only by creating *nanjangpan* (난장판, =chaotic place) which is needed to produce a new harmonious relatedness. This process accelerates the awareness level in people, so that people can name the injustice of the society. Once more, people attempt to create God's order which is lost in the society. At the end of the play, the masks which are worn by the players and made of paper are burned. This act seems to be the manifestation of people's awareness of injustice and destructive power within a society, which is symbolically represented in masks, and their astute awareness of the need to mend the broken relatedness in the society. Burning the masks can be interpreted as an acting out of the people's belief in the potent, evil power of the masks. Nonetheless, people who cannot revolt against the whole system can at least experience through plays the justice of the world and God's original harmonious relationship, thus finding the energy to survive.

In community ritual, the people (*minjung*) are the initiators, and this can be viewed as a grass-roots movement due to the conscientization of the oppressed. The need for

collective ritual derives from the Korean understanding that the fundamental condition in life is the connectedness among existences in God's realm. Thus, people value the importance of cooperation, democratic participation of people in a communal society, and the divine rule in fertility, production, and distribution to attain proper relatedness. However, this calls for the radical understanding of the human existential mode from political, economic, and spiritual perspectives.

The communal ritual enhances people's emancipation from their oppressed reality, and also channels repressed energy into a dynamic transforming power. The essential spirituality in shamanism also is manifested in the communal ritual. There is a clear understanding of the fundamental spiritual power, the feminine spirituality, which engenders life. It is different from the oppositional, dualistic view of feminine and masculine spirituality in Western thought. Feminine spirituality, revealed in group communal ritual in Korean shamanism, is considered the fundamental life source with its embracing power containing everlasting energy for new creations. Therefore, people constantly seek to be connected with divine power by having communal and individual ritual which will help people to vision the complete, wholistic, harmonious relatedness in God's realm. The ritual is people's yearning and attempt to regain wholeness through reconciliation. But, it also claims people's radical participation in this process. Even though the attempt to transform the reality through dynamic power seems unsuccessful in achieving its goal, it has been a driving force, whether or not people consciously acknowledge it.

#### Integrated Healing Methodology for Healing

#### Korean Women's *Han* in a Faith Community

In previous chapters, Korean women's *han* has been discussed from socio-historical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. Korean women's *han* emerges from the social structure which oppresses women to be non-beings, and historically the entire society has suffered from invasions by other countries. As a social being in a patriarchal

society, a Korean woman's inner psychological self cannot avoid the influence of the society's negative attitude toward women. Spirituality has also played very important functions both positive and negative. Therefore, healing for Korean people, particularly for Korean women's *han*, has to deal with all these dimensions to provide an insight for effective healing in today's society. In addition, the ministry of Jesus has to be understood for an effective treatment to occur.<sup>43</sup> As a shaman's healing presupposes divine presence, the Christian community has to presuppose the immanent healing power of God through Jesus. Thus, the methodology for healing Korean Christian women has to emerge from the interpretation of Jesus' ministry within the Korean cultural context.

Every healing methodology is rooted in the history and the value system of a society. Western and Korean societies have different world-views, but both societies have been influenced by patriarchy.<sup>44</sup> Hence, the integrated healing for Korean Christian women's *han*, the hidden ideology and values in psychotherapy, and Western theology have to be discussed to determine an integrated healing methodology. It is also necessary that a healing process address both personal and societal dimensions. Moreover, for Korean Christian women, Jesus' healing ministry has to be undergirded for wholistic healing.

#### Integration of Jesus' Healing Ministry

The church is a faith community founded on the profession of a people's faith in Jesus' salvific act. Therefore, the Christian church and its people have to remember how

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<sup>43</sup> There have been strong arguments by conscientized Christian women on the maleness of Jesus, and there have been many attempts to reconstruct the image of Jesus. Even though Jesus has been interpreted mainly by males from a male perspective, Jesus still manifests himself beyond gender or human ideologies. For example, women in the medieval period confessed their experience of Jesus as Mother. In contemporary thought, Rosemary Ruether argues that Jesus is the liberator not in his maleness, but in his renunciation of the system of oppression, leading to a new humanity of service and mutual empowerment. See Eleanor L. McLaughlin, "The Christian Past: Does it Hold a Future for Women?", Womanspirit Rising, ed. Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow, 104; and Rosemary Radford Ruether, To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 56.

<sup>44</sup> Sturdivant, 10-11.

Jesus ministered to people. Jesus' ministry in the New Testament proclaims the immanent love and power of God for all people and the urgent need to restore the broken relationship with God. Jesus' ministry culminates in the manifestation of God's compassion, love, and caring for people without any conditions or moral judgments. God cares about people's pain, *han*, and God directly intervenes in people's lives in a very concrete way.<sup>45</sup> Jesus' ministry enables people to reconcile with themselves, community members, and especially with God, and to transform the brokenness to a wholeness which encompasses all dimensions of life.

Jesus' approach to healing, which was accompanied by a word and a touch, also symbolically represents the importance of communication with God and direct contact with God's power.<sup>46</sup> Jesus is a mediator; but he is full of the spiritual power of God just as Korean shamans are in need of full spirituality to heal people. Therefore, whoever touches Jesus can experience the presence of God's power which transforms lives from self-centered to God-centered. It is the beginning of right relatedness. Jesus' ministry also focused on the compassionate healing of mentally, physically, and spiritually ill people.<sup>47</sup>

Nonetheless, this wholistic healing ministry of Jesus disappears in many churches. In addition to the gradual change in theology which emerges from the dualistic and separatistic view of Western society, there seems to be a subtle psychological process at

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<sup>45</sup> The first writer of the Gospel of Mark describes Jesus as a teacher, preacher, healer and exorcist with God's authority. See Marinus de Jonge, Christology in Context (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 63-68.

<sup>46</sup> "Touch" means various healing actions which Jesus employed in healing people. It does not mean literally the act of touching.

<sup>47</sup> Out of the 3,779 verses in the four gospels, 727 relate specifically to the healing of physical and mental illness and the resurrection of the dead. In addition there are 165 verses that deal in general with eternal life, and 31 references to miracles that include healing. See Morton T. Kelsey, Psychology, Medicine and Christian Healing (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 42.

work.<sup>48</sup> The following is a hypothetical explanation of this psychological process in an extreme situation.

In a society where the male has absolute power, men tend to view themselves as absolutely good while repressing their negative side, projecting it onto women, and identifying themselves with the male image of God--which is actually the product of their own wishful image.<sup>49</sup> This male God tends to represent the absolute good as men are good, without any negative dimensions. God is morally good and transcends human evilness. Women become the carriers of the negative side of men, and men categorize their experiences as either good or bad while identifying their bad experiences with women. Or, whatever becomes closely connected to women becomes bad, such as nature. In this view, people already have the precondition for sin from their incessant desire to be like God and to be free from their naturalness as in Rienhold Neibuhr's description of the human ontological condition--human being's destination to be at the juncture between God's realm and the natural world.<sup>50</sup>

Consequently, human beings tend to become solely responsible for their moral behavior since God cannot have any negative attributes. Illness or misfortune is perceived as punishment from God due to a person's behavior. Men cannot accept any connotation of the negativity of God which will threaten their goodness. Nonetheless, people cannot avoid the feeling of guilt because humans cannot be perfect or abolish all negative dimensions of inner feelings or life experiences. Instead of accepting these experiences, men want to find

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<sup>48</sup> See Ruether, New Woman/New Earth, 190 for the process of the dualistic view in Christianity. See also Kelsey, 157-86, Chap. 9 in Psychology, Medicine and Christian Healing for a discussion of how healing in Western Christianity disappears from Church ministry.

<sup>49</sup> Man projects evilness upon woman, as in the myth of the Fall in which Eve is the initiator of original sin. See Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father (Boston: Beacon, 1973), 45. See also Carol P. Christ, Laughter of Aphrodite (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 22.

<sup>50</sup> This human nature, rather man's nature, is articulated by Neibuhr in The Nature and Destiny of Man. See the argument on this point from a feminist's perspective by Plaskow, Sex, Sin and Grace.

answers by themselves for the problems caused by their evilness. This reaction is based on the assumption that human beings are solely responsible as independent beings, separated from God. It leads men to believe that they have the almighty power to find answers for human problems, including life and death. Men can hardly accept death as part of the natural process of God's creation, although it contains a new life within itself. Therefore, men think they are in control of self and the world, and life becomes secularized removed from the sacredness. One cannot accept divine power beyond one's senses. Thus, men in patriarchal Christianity have a split self--the almighty, powerful self and the repressed, shadow self--and do not have the ability to reconcile the two selves into a wholistic one. Instead of healing, patriarchal Christianity perpetuates the cycle of separatism. As a result, the patriarchal Christian community has largely lost the memory of Jesus' healing toward wholeness--the trajectory of God's divine power within the human realm.

It is evident that Jesus' healing ministry was not focused only on the proclamation of the word. He also tried to be full of spiritual power through a constant struggle within himself to be in right relatedness with God. Such power enabled him to heal people psychologically, physically, and spiritually. Therefore, healing in a Christian faith community has to integrate both word and spiritual power so that God's salvific act in Jesus can be remembered and reclaimed in the lives of present day Christians. But, most of all, patriarchal Christians have to liberate God from their own narrow projection. Then they can experience once more God's compassionate love which will transform persons as well as the society.

The ethos of Korean shamanism provides a spiritual realm for people's everyday lives. The people's rituals and their whole lives are spirit-centered, and the union with God through *nori* is a common life experience, even though they have no clear awareness of the connection. Therefore, the openness to accepting God's existence and God's intervention is natural for them, unlike Western culture which tends to acknowledge only a rationalized interpretation of the world. Moreover, the shamanism of healing and supernatural power

which still exists in Korean culture not only facilitates the people's belief in God's power, but encourages people to expect it to happen.

There are many similarities between the functions of a shaman in early traditional society and Jesus. First, a spiritual leader in shamanism facilitates the reconciliation of relatedness not only to self, but also expands it to community members, family members, ancestor spirits, and deities. Secondly, a shaman as a mediator of divine power heals physical and psychological illnesses. A shaman as a mediator directly intervenes in peoples' affairs in a very concrete way, just as Jesus did. Thirdly, in shamanism, there are gods or goddesses which have the same emotions as human beings: anger; joy; gratitude; jealousy; hurt; and happiness. These deities can be readily identified as the devil or Satan in the Bible, and they provide objects on which people can project their negative feelings instead of projecting it onto women or the oppressed group.

Shamanism has been criticized for a lack of morality, but its aim is to recover lost connectedness which will resolve any dysfunctional problems in individuals and society. The implicit attempt is a fundamental structural correction from which proper behavior will follow, even though morality is not emphasized. However, the original world-view of shamanism has become largely distorted and forgotten. Nonetheless, shamanism exists for oppressed, alienated people. This is parallel to Jesus, who did not deny the common peoples' worldly struggle. Actually, Jesus' ministry focuses on oppressed people's *han*. He proclaimed the love of God and healing within God's love, but Jesus was always healing accompanied by transformative power which compelled individuals to expand their life energy, released from *han*, to society. Moreover, Jesus confronted the injustice of the world with a non-violent attitude. Therefore, Jesus' healing ministry can be summarized as follows:

1. His fundamental message is the proclamation of the reign of God. To heal people from brokenness to wholeness, he demands an urgent reconciliation between God and people, and among people.



2. He calls for the immediate repentance of sinners who deprive others of the right to live. This repentance is sought not only to help the oppressed to recover their own human dignity and freedom, but for the benefit of the oppressors as well.

3. Jesus' healing for physical, psychological, and spiritual sickness always calls for an individual's responsibility in the community. Healing means recovering wholeness from oppression, which helps people to understand who they are in God's domain. Only after being healed by God, can one resume responsibility for self and community.

4. His ministry of healing is also group-centered. He teaches people as a group, heals persons within the group, demands that individuals reconnect with other members of the community, and challenges persons to take responsibility for the community. Individual transformation is always extended to community.

5. The reign of God in Jesus lights a way for people to follow which goes beyond human society, so that people can orient to the world in a concrete way while having hope in God's divine world.

6. The process of transformation is non-violent. Jesus demands not only a radically different existential life mode, but also introduces a radically different concept of power.

Then, the question is how a church can integrate Jesus' ministry for the healing of Korean people's *han*, particularly Korean Christian women's *han*. Currently some churches in Korea focus on the shamanistic function of physical healing from spiritual power while giving little attention to social justice; and they attract enormous numbers of people. Some groups attack those churches and ignore healing ministry in their own churches from fear of shamanizing their churches; they focus largely on the message of God, the word.

To undergird Jesus' wholistic ministry in Korean Christianity, it will be necessary to name the inner psychological dimension of the Korean people which is embedded in their ethos. By bringing the collective unconscious ethos--the wholistic world-view of

shamanism-- into awareness, people will not blindly follow indiscriminate, unconscious psychological needs seeking only physical healing by supernatural power and individualistic worldly prosperity.

The Korean ethos has its root in both the individual and the community, but the awareness of community in the collective ethos of Korean people has been obliterated gradually, encouraging people to be self-centered. By identifying the original ethos, which aims for wholeness in every level of existence, the need to indulge only in individual, narcissistic spirituality will be lessened. From that point, Korean Christians can expand their consciousness from the individual level to the community level in the reign of God as Jesus proclaimed. Most of all, Korean Christianity has to be free from the patriarchal, hierarchical structure within Christianity in order to promote the wholistic healing of Korean Christian women as well as the Korean community.

#### Integration of Healing Methodologies in a Faith Community

As discussed earlier, in order to determine effective healing methods for the Korean community, particularly for Korean Christian women, Jesus' wholistic healing ministry has to be undergirded. Further, insights from the traditional healing system of Korea also have to be integrated into new methods to enhance the effectiveness of the healing. In addition, Western counseling methods have to be introduced with an awareness of possible bias against women. The ultimate aim of the healing of Korean Christian women is to liberate them to live their God-given lives fully. This liberation of women will also liberate men and create a society which will bring about the reign of God in this world.

Wounded Healer in a Faith Community. As the shaman played an important role for the individual, family, and community in the traditional society, pastors and pastoral counselors are needed to fulfill such functions in today's Korea. The extended family system, with a low level of social mobility, had provided a support system for people's life crises--in addition to shamanism's healing function--in the traditional society. But the growing nuclear family system demands help beyond people's own families. And yet, due

to cultural values and the lack of interest, the professional care system in Korea is in a very early stage. Moreover, due to their cultural background, the people are reluctant to discuss personal problems with a person outside the family. There is also a misconception about asking for help with emotional problems, since such problems are considered a kind of madness and provoke deep shame both for the individual and his or her family members.

As a representative of the faith community, a pastor or pastoral counselor who can overcome the above obstacles becomes even more essential for the society. The strong spirituality of Korean people, their world-view, and the increased numbers of church members, call for the faith community to take immediate responsibility for the care of people.<sup>51</sup> Particularly, woman ministers are needed for Korean Christian women for their symbolic power on women's psyche. There is also a rich tradition of women's roles in the biblical world and the present Christian community.<sup>52</sup>

The following are some recommendable aspects of healers in a Christian faith community.

1. Spirituality. Unlike other healing professionals, a healer in a faith community is expected to provide a set of values or system of meaning within God's realm. In recent trends in Westernized pastoral counseling, pastoral counselors are sometimes reluctant to identify themselves as "pastors" since they do not want to impose any religious identity before a person is ready to search for their own spirituality.<sup>53</sup> It is important to know people's psychological state. In the Korean cultural context, such identification may help people to understand better their situation within God's realm and their desire to be

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<sup>51</sup> Augusburger, 284. The elements of healing in shamanism such as faith, hope, belief, and suggestibility are central to both shaman healing and the psychotherapeutic process.

<sup>52</sup> See Barbara J. MacHaffie, Her Story (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 28-32 for women's role in the Bible and the interpretation of biblical stories from a woman's perspective.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Oden argues that the identity of a pastoral counselor has to be different from that of a secular, psychological therapist. See Oden, Pastoral Theology (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 1-15.

connected with God, which will provide a creative space in which to resolve their problems.

Wounded people are desperately seeking God's intervention. Healers who have been wounded, but healed by encountering the Ultimate Reality, can present the possibility of healing from one's own experience calmly but firmly. A healer's courage, gained from a personal experience of healing, will precipitate the commitment of other wounded persons to encounter God, because a wounded healer will not be overwhelmed with others' pain. The uncomfortable feelings from others' pain will not be repressed or denied since the healer can identify with the people's pain. Without fear, a healer can invite others along the same path to celebrate the union with God. Nonetheless, this path may call for a healer's courageous risk at being wounded as the healer as partner will experience the pain of rebirth in the process of healing.

A healer is a person who has been healed and has established a concrete relationship with God; a healer can present God's acceptance to a wounded person through a deep human encounter. This requires a healer's total presence and an openness from the center of her or his existence grounded in God.<sup>54</sup> Thus, a pastor or pastoral counselor has to reflect critically on whether he or she is willing to be open to experience God's presence in a concrete way, as Jesus did. It is possible, only through constant struggle, to be in a right relationship with God as Jesus was, so that a healer can remain at the juncture between this world and the other world. This allows a healer to be humble enough to invite all suffering people to envision their future in God's realm, while being healthily rooted in this world.

2. Gender. The healer's gender in helping women is another dimension to be aware of, since a healer's value system invariably influences the process of healing. Research shows that a female healer is more effective for healing women.<sup>55</sup> As a woman,

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<sup>54</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, The Wounded Healer (New York: Image, 1972), 38-39.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 150.

a healer can understand other women's *han* more easily. With critical perception, a healer can interpret her own pain from being a woman in a patriarchal society, as well as from being a finite human being. Thus, effective healing is possible through similar experiences in the society. Without being in the same space, it is rather difficult to have sufficient empathy to understand others' pain and problems, while keeping a healthy distance. A healer who has painful life experiences in a similar context or has internal conflict will be flexible enough to penetrate the wounded person's soul. Within the same common ground, it is possible for both to name the causes of illness without judgment on the part of the healer.

As a Korean woman shaman (who has experienced the abyss of her soul and society) can understand her humanness in spite of her spiritual power, and will not claim authority, righteousness, or judgment which does not belong to her, a pastor or pastoral counselor in a faith community also needs to have a clear awareness of herself or himself as a mediator or vessel of God's healing power for other wounded people, and should not claim superiority over other wounded women which would prohibit healthy growth.<sup>56</sup>

3. Conscientization of the healer. Pastors and pastoral counselors need to be conscientized about their value system and their unconscious sexism. Male pastors and pastoral counselors need to be conscientized about women's social condition. Female healers need not only conscientization about the social condition of women, but also must possess a conscious awareness of their value system toward other women, their own lifestyle, and their involvement in changing social reality for women.<sup>57</sup> Most of all, conscientization of women healers is the most important aspect of pastoral care, since they

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<sup>56</sup> See Lynn N. Rhodes, Co-creating: A Feminist Vision of Ministry (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 41-47. Sandra M. Schneiders also discusses the effects of excluding women from ministry in "The Effects of Women's Experience on Their Spirituality," Women's Spirituality, ed. Joann Wolski Conn, 31-45.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 150.

are the role models for other women. It is essential that healers themselves are very acutely aware of women's situation in society so that they do not label or blame women for the societal causes of their pain. If a healer is not in touch with her unconscious, internalization of patriarchal ideology and value system, she will adversely affect other women who seek help because of the healer's identity as a divine. Therefore, a healer needs to be critically reflective of herself, other women, and society. Furthermore, a woman healer must have trust in other wounded women's potential power to grow, even though the wounded women are not yet aware of their own power.<sup>58</sup> From this awareness, a woman healer can facilitate healthy growth in other women for both personal and societal transformation.<sup>59</sup>

4. Prophetic function as a reconstructionist. A healer has to dare to deepen other women's wounds compassionately to help them gain a new freedom from their reality. Also, as a leader of a faith community, a healer has to be always ready to speak prophetically against injustice in society. If a healer does not claim the injustice done to people, society, and nature, she is no longer a healer in the truest sense. Therefore, women healers should not repeat the subjugated role held in a private, family patriarchal system. A healer and leader of a faith community has to build her healing ministry "in reflection upon women's experience and in the ethical challenge to care for the well-being of all women and the development of their full humanity."<sup>60</sup>

A woman healer in a faith community has to function as a psychologist, spiritual leader, prophet, and protector of the community, but most of all she must function as a

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<sup>58</sup> Howard Clinebell, Growth Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 52-53. See also Howard Clinebell, Contemporary Growth Therapies (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 237.

<sup>59</sup> See Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk (Boston: Beacon, 1983), Chap. 8 for the argument on the historical, theological need for women's ministry in the church. See also Oden, Chap. 4 for his argument on the importance of women's ministry.

<sup>60</sup> Rhodes, 24.

reconstructionist of the society.<sup>61</sup> However, one of the most important factors in healing Korean people, especially Korean Christian women's *han*, will be the healers' mediator role for God's intervention in people's lives, and the willingness to invite the wounded and God into one sacred place where the union of all is possible through the joy of life. This is achieved through the healer's inner power that is connected to God's creative life force.

5. Value system. One of the issues in the healing process is the value system of the theory and the practice of the method.<sup>62</sup> Traditional psychotherapy has defined women's psychological problems from the perception of male experiences, without considering the external influence upon women's psyche or the differences of women's experiences.<sup>63</sup> This psychotherapy has created the myths in the psychotherapeutic milieu about women that women's psychological problems arise from their own inner psychological world exclusively, and emotional distress has to be treated like a physical sickness, and that treatment has to be done by medical experts who are usually male.<sup>64</sup> These myths exclude the influence of society on the psychological problems in women, tends to facilitate the process of prescription addiction among women, and therefore accepts the male experience and knowledge as the norm for treating women. These myths will work against women and cause more depression or psychoses unless a healer's attitude is changed to facilitate

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<sup>61</sup> See Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Feminist Spirituality, Christian Identity, and Catholic Vision," *Womanspirit Rising*, 145. Fiorenza argues that the exclusion of women in the church is due to man's fear of women's domination of the church and therefore the destruction of the existing system, which can be related to women's power of reconstruction.

<sup>62</sup> Sturdivant, 11. She asserts that the value and philosophy of the therapy always impact the treatment. From this perspective, the treatment for women presupposes the feminists' philosophy.

<sup>63</sup> Greenspan, 5-12. See also Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness* (New York: Avon, 1972). Chesler's classic book illustrates the relationship between a woman's mental health and her treatment by healing professionals equipped with patriarchal ideology. See also Hannah Lerman, "From Freud to Feminist Personality Theory: Getting Here From There," *The Psychology of Women*, ed. Mary Roth Walsh, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 50. This article criticizes Freud's theory because Freud's data is collected narrowly in terms of the clients' social status, women's life experience, and cultural differences.

<sup>64</sup> Greenspan, 16-27.

women's autonomy for their own lives, to value women's experiences as authentic, and to empower women in all relationships.<sup>65</sup>

From the above discussion, some general conclusions can be drawn about the qualifications of pastoral counselors in the context of the modern Christian church.

1. One of the most important qualifications of pastors and pastoral counselors is their spirituality and their devotion to the calling to be healers. They need the continuous empowerment that comes from God, and must grow with an awareness of their own inner world.

2. Pastors and pastoral counselors have to search for the wholistic healing of the people. Therefore, the healing role of pastors and pastoral counselors cannot be separated from other functions of ministry.<sup>66</sup>

3. Pastors and pastoral counselors must have the same status as the people they attempt to heal. For this reason women pastors and pastoral counselors are needed, particularly to heal Korean women's *han* .

4. Pastors and pastoral counselors need to have the ability to see the systematic dysfunction of the society which causes *han* in people, and the courage to be prophets. Most of all, pastors or pastoral counselors have to be conscientized about the evil powers of sexism and classism, which inhibit not only people but also God's power in the world.<sup>67</sup>

5. Pastors and pastoral counselors must be people who recognize the inheritance of history and reconstruct the present world, while embracing the future hope in the reign of God.

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<sup>65</sup> Sturdivant, 6.

<sup>66</sup> Howard Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 26.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 40-41.



6. Pastors and pastoral counselors have to be equipped with knowledge and skill in healing methods and the ability to theologize on human life situations in order to help people vision the answers in God's realm.

Guidelines for Effective Healing. Every healing process inevitably differs according to various factors involved in each case. Therefore, it is difficult to provide definite guidelines for a healing process. Nonetheless, the following suggestions are based on the theoretical hypothesis which have to be tested and expanded.

1. Jesus' healing and shamanism. Korean traditional society has its own healing method, which has been effective at a certain level. The individual healing of the shamanistic rituals, and the folk communal rituals as group healing, excel as healing processes in certain perspectives. This shows again that effective healing methods can be learned from a culture. However, the healing for community has mostly disappeared in Korean society and the shamanistic world-view of wholeness has become unconscious in the people, which allows shamanism to function more often as a manipulative force. The task is to determine how all of these healing processes, including those of shamanism and Western healing methods, can be utilized to transform the patriarchal society into a more humanized, wholistic one within God's realm, and how implicit values which may not be viable for true healing in those system can be recognized.

The shaman's individual healing process is usually a one time consultation. A shaman gives an immediate diagnosis and prognosis for a problem. The causes of people's problems are projected onto deities or spirits, and answers are usually derived through healing rituals which include placation of the spirits, confession of one's wrong doings, finishing the unfinished business, or providing a catharsis through communication with the divine. There are similarities between Jesus' healing ministry and the shaman's, but Jesus' ministry has its own distinctive characters.

Jesus' healing ministry always accompanies the proclamation of the realm of God, the immediacy of God's dominance, and the prompt repentance of people. Jesus calls for

repentance of the sin which causes the brokenness with God, with other human beings, and with oneself. Jesus always asks that a person be responsible for oneself and for the community in order for wholistic healing to occur. Even though a shaman's healing may have these dimensions, implicitly or unconsciously, there are differences between Jesus' healing and that of a shaman.

In each healing event, Jesus always challenges human attitudes toward life, announces God's world, urges persons to make choices for their lives, and demands that persons resume responsibility for self and others to participate in constructing God's realm in this world. But in the shaman's healing event, especially in individual healing which is the main form among shamans in present day Korea, the main focus is usually on relieving present pains without knowing the core issues in suffering. Thus, the event does not deal with the most fundamental dimensions of healing.

One of the important dimensions of Jesus' healing is the emphasis on the power and presence of the holy spirit. The power lies in an acute awareness of the transformative power of the holy spirit in each person, awakening the sense of historical responsibility, and the immediacy of one's desire to participate in the process of change in the human community. But in shamanism the spirituality becomes a tool for realizing one's wish through supernatural power. Thus, the function to attain one's individual need becomes the primary dimension, rather than wholistic healing.

While the individual healing of Jesus follows a wholistic approach, shamanism tends to focus on releasing anxiety. The therapeutic function for releasing anxiety in shamanism is very effective, but it blocks people from gaining insight into the self or from determining the fundamental structural problem which causes the suffering. In patriarchal societies, women do not have a clear concept of self (or healthy boundaries) because

society demands that women be sacrificial to men and exist in codependent relationships.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, women tend to be diffused within relationships, and feel responsible for everything that happens to other members of the family.<sup>69</sup> But this sense of responsibility is actually the lack of response to others, and response is the most important step for intimate and healthy relationships. Healthy, intimate, and responsible relationships are possible only through one's clear, honest understanding of self and relationships. Therefore, wholistic healing for women involves more than just the release of feelings, but includes knowing oneself and one's reality. Furthermore, the spirituality of shamanism has become privatized, individualized, and narcissistic; it releases pain with the false hope of solving present misfortunes and never expands spirituality beyond the concrete human reality.

The shaman's diagnosis of a consulting person's problem, through a spiritual, supernatural seeing power, deprives a person of knowing herself or himself in the process. Furthermore, a diagnosis which is usually projected onto deities or spirits abolishes one's sense of responsibility. This process will only perpetuate the dependency by women on supernatural power without helping them to claim their power.

According to Bible stories, Jesus' healing of an individual usually occurred during one encounter. Nonetheless, the stories also reveal how long the person yearned to be healed and whether his or her sickness was physical, psychological, or spiritual. A shaman's healing can also be considered short term. It is effective for poor people who need a sense of relief from their problems and cannot afford long term therapy. However, in most cases healing requires a long period of time. The people's expectations of short term healing, as in shamanism, will block the process of knowing oneself due to

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<sup>68</sup> See Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict and Women's Reality in which the author analyzes the close connection between women's codependency and a patriarchal social structure.

<sup>69</sup> Gilligan, 127.

disappointment in or misunderstanding of the healing process as a quick fix. In addition, for Jesus' healing, the process depends on people's readiness and openness to be whole. Thus, the double edge for healers in the Korean Christian community is how to: construct the process in brief form; make the healing process good enough to help people gain insights into the causes of their problems; and avoid projecting causes onto external forces, as is done with other spirits in shamanism.

Jesus sometimes healed a person only by a word. But sometimes he performed a symbolic act which can be viewed as ritual. In shamanism, ritual is the most effective treatment because it provides the lost sacredness in the psyche. Through ritual, a person can participate in a wholistic way in the healing process. Recently, various therapeutic methods have emerged which demand active participation of a client through music, dancing, or acting. Ritual can heal a person physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Therefore, talk therapy or preaching in the church is effective enough for some people, but certain rituals can activate the process of healing for others.

Jesus also introduced the concept of servant when he washed his disciple's feet. This manifested the importance of the healer's status in the dynamic healing process--that of being humble to serve other wounded persons. In this aspect, the shaman in Korea has been effective, and can teach the healers in today's Church community how to serve other wounded persons.

In addition to the above differences and similarities between shamanism and Jesus' ministry, consideration must be given to the effectiveness of individual vs group therapy in Korean culture. Individual therapy may be less effective because of the Korean people's personality and the essential structure of shamanism. Group therapy will help participants to identify their problems, share their *han*, and support each other with deep empathy--which is especially important for those who have weak egos. Also, a structured session time as used in Western counseling will not be effective for Korean people, at least in the beginning. For Koreans, the concept of time is different from that of Western people.

Instead of fitting into fixed time schedules as in the West, Koreans tend to be very flexible since time schedules are for people, not vice versa, in their traditional values. Therefore, to set up time boundaries before forming a strong rapport will make people feel less respected or valued. Therefore, a healer in a Korean community must know how to be flexible in structuring time, while helping people to learn how to set boundaries. In addition to those issues previously discussed, the most important factor for pastoral care in the Korean faith community is the presence of a Divine God. But trust in God's power also has a double edge since, while enhancing faith in God, a healer has to empower people to be strong enough to gain interdependent autonomy instead of dysfunctional dependency.

2. Process of healing. Healing can be achieved through people's constant struggle to understand fundamental ontological human problems, and their yearning desire for God's pragmatic answer to their struggle. Healing is the process of moving from brokenness to wholeness, from the split self to the whole self, from weakness of human condition to empowerment in God's realm, and from injustice to wholistic justice in God. It is the process of awakening after being silent and blind to the beauty and wisdom of the world. This is the process of *pulim* : liberation from oppression; lifelessness to life in God. This process demands that the Korean people know who they are, their previous underlying view of wholeness, their aim in life, and the Ultimate with which they yearn to be united.

The interviewees in this study reveal various stages of the growing process. Most of them are willing to share their pain, and readily can identify their wound as *han* . They seem to understand their reality while conforming to it or being in a constant tension with it. However, in spite of their insights on their pain, most of them fail to make connections between their *han* and full *hanpuri*. The following discussion is the researcher's hypothesis for an effective *hanpuri* process for Korean people, especially for Korean women based on the data from the interviews. This hypothesis needs to be tested and revised to meet the needs of the people. The hypothetical process of the healing stages involves:

a. Naming the root of *han*. In shamanism, the naming process has both negative and positive effects. People have named their pain as *han*, which is a conscious way of naming the pain and cause, and this has helped them to avoid unnecessary guilt for their pain. More often they name the cause as an external one and this has some validity since Korean people's *han* arises largely from the society's oppression. However, placing the cause outside of themselves, in spirits and deities through a shaman, has lessened women's acute awareness. This transference blocks women from making connections of awareness regarding cause and from deepening their awareness, while providing women with a way to resolve their emotional *han*. Thus, shamanism has helped Korean women on the one hand to release their *han*, but on the other hand it blocks the process of naming.

This process of naming also occurs frequently in the Korean church community, where causes are identified as pain or misfortune which are God's will for better faith, or where bad behaviors are perceived as making God angry enough to enact punishment, which provokes guilt. Therefore, it is important for a healer to bring out unconscious conflicts so that persons can see clearly the powerful psychological dynamics of which they are not aware instead of projecting all the causes onto the external world. To name clearly the cause of their pain will free people from helpless dependence on God's power. Therefore, only after naming can women start the process of healing.

b. Owning the *hanful* reality. The next step is the process of owning. After having the power and insight to name the cause, a person can own the reality--reality of herself and the world. A person then knows the cause of the pain, how this pain is inflicted, and how to interact with it. The result is an awareness of personal issues and external causes. To face the reality with clear awareness and honesty demands one's courage, since it challenges a person to make a decision--a decision to face and change the reality or to avoid the reality with deception. But a person has to own the reality without fear--fear of self and the world--which causes blindness and silence. Therefore, owning is the process of seeing

oneself from the perspective of the inner self, the world, and God, and it is acknowledging the reality with critical reflection.

c. Releasing the *han*. Next is the stage of releasing which has been the main function in shamanism. Unfortunately the releasing of feelings in shamanism has not facilitated the connectedness to one's inner self and others, even though community ritual in traditional society has helped to release the collective suppressed feelings of community members. The process of releasing encompasses more than releasing one's suppressed feelings. It is not just releasing of *han*, anger or pain, reactively without clear awareness. After naming and owning, one can discern the causes of their pain whether they are collective or individual. Knowing the cause helps people to regain power to release the feelings.

The process of releasing *han*, however, has to go deeper than the personal private level. If the process does not deal with the *han* of injustice and with wholeness in the world, it becomes only a personal, superficial process of releasing one's trivial emotions. Thus, *han* has to be understood not only from the personal level but also from the collective level, so that the power which can be released (after releasing negative emotions) can be directed toward a collective level of transformation. It is the process of opening up to oneself, others, and God. By releasing the acute pain, the wound can be healed.

d. Reconnecting the broken relatedness. The releasing process has to be expanded to include connecting. After naming, owning, and releasing, one can be connected positively with one's self. Only after this positive connection with self, can one connect positively with others. While shamanism restores the connectedness with ancestor spirits or deities, connecting with others is rare, even though communal rituals in traditional society had this function.

Connecting increases each other's life energy. A person's life energy can be ignited and multiplied by connecting to others' life energies, since the energy consumed negatively can be used positively.

f. Activating the process of empowering. When connecting is achieved, empowering is a natural process. Connecting is the process of empowering one's self, others, and the whole community. Empowering is the process of multiplying God's power of creation as each one's power of life is fully realized. It is like a ripple in a pond. Empowering of an individual's empowering will make an ever widening circle. Thus, individual empowerment contains the transforming power for all. Naturally, individual empowerment continues both at the individual and collective level.

Even though the communal ritual in shamanism partially shared this function, the communal ritual in Korean society has largely disappeared.

g. Transforming *hanful* to *hanless*. The process of empowering will lead to transformation--transformation of self and the society. When a person is empowered, one can shape one's self-image positively. A person with a healthy self-image will be more sensitive to others' freedoms and rights while seeking respect for one's right and freedom from others. Empowerment leads to transformation in a non-violent way. It is the process of conscientization and liberation. Only by going through this awareness process, can the oppressed avoid perpetuating the vicious circle and becoming the oppressor after gaining a certain amount of power.

When one is empowered and transformed, one becomes the agent of change and change itself. Transformation of individuals will facilitate the transformation of the group. Even though the process of transformation may be natural after empowerment, more often the social structure blocks this flow. Thus, women need to be empowered and also need to work intentionally with others to collect their power, so that social transformation will be possible.

Traditional Korean society often attempted societal transformation in the past through such means as the *Tonghak* movement, but in most cases the communal effort could not effectively challenge the system although such efforts did release the



community's suppressed feelings toward the ruling class. The student revolution in April 19, 1960 shows us the dynamic strength of collective power.

The proposed process outlined above is not a fixed-stage or linear process. One person might experience the whole process in a very short period of time, while another person can require a much longer period with more in-depth awareness. One can fluctuate from one state to the other, depending on various factors in life, or the process can be halted for a period of time. There will be various levels of an individual's awareness and growth, so persons will perceive different levels and dimension of issues. Moreover, the presence of supporting members is the most essential component in healing and undergirds the above process. To have a support group of people is essential for the whole process.

The process of growing can be compared to the process of giving birth. The process is painful as are contractions, and sometimes a woman prefers to stay rather than to grow, as a woman may die in the midst of labor pains without giving birth. As the process of giving birth and the new life vary according to individuals, the process of *hanpuri* and the state of *hanlessness* from *hanfulness* will differ from person to person. And yet as each new life is precious with its own God-given right, each moment of growth is precious since one is participating in the process of God's creation. As new life is a celebration of joy, each moment of *hanpuri* can be a celebration of the joy of life. Each moment will bring not only a person but the whole community nearer to the world of God, the Absolute harmonious wholeness, because every moment of a person's experience influences other members in the community and the universe.

The purpose of presenting this hypothetical process is to help the Korean people, particularly Korean women, reflect upon their life journey with a critical mind which may help them to be aware of self, others, and God. Then, the question is how the church can facilitate this process in a concrete way.

Healing Ministry for Korean Christian Women. Ministry itself involves the healing of people in every dimension, but only a specific ministry will be discussed to examine the

viable programs which can help people in the church. Again, the following proposals are not fixed answers, but only options or heuristic suggestions which can be used by others to develop further programs to enable the process of healing to occur more effectively.

1. Women's ways of sharing: storytelling. Sharing a *hanful* story with other women provides an opportunity for a woman to experience her independence because, unlike the counseling setting, there is no claim of diagnosis by the healer. Sharing her *han* gives a woman authority over her own problem.<sup>70</sup> Traditionally, storytelling has been women's way of sharing pain, insight, and spiritual quests. It not only helps women to relieve their emotions, but also helps them to identify their problems rather than repressing and directing them to themselves.

Women's stories reveal sacredness, because they embrace women's sense of self and the world they experience and create. The sacredness contained in herstory provides a meaning and purpose for women and for others, even though the society is structured against them.<sup>71</sup> Hence, the story of Korean women is a *hanful* story, but it points to the Ultimate Reality because it challenges the fundamental question of human existence. Thus, the healing process for growth can be facilitated by giving equal responsibility to healer and wounded, which is possible through in-depth human encounters without any pseudo authority. Also, for Korean as well as other women in different cultures, sharing stories will be an effective way of healing and conscientization without a need to label women as patients or clients.

Besides the function of storytelling in various structured occasions such as ritual, the pastor or pastoral counselor has to be alert to hearing people's problems in daily conversation, and to encourage conversation which will open their hearts. This can be

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<sup>70</sup> Sturdivant, 159.

<sup>71</sup> Christ, Diving Deep and Surfacing, 2,17. See also Sallie McFague, Speaking in Parables (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 138-39; and William J. Bausch, Storytelling: Imagination and Faith (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publ., 1988), 172-73.

accomplished naturally instead of in an official setting such as a meeting, unless a person requests it. An informal setting is very appropriate for a shame culture because it lessens the burden on people to make the decision to schedule a consultation. Also a pastor or pastoral counselor can facilitate the formation of a group or connectedness among church members to hear their problems, since a pastor or pastoral counselor is very limited in the number of people that can be served. This is the art of sharing ministry with lay people.

2. Religious rituals for healing and developmental growth. As in shamanism, which provides a few rituals for human life development and crises, the church needs to set up helping programs to support members as they go through life stages and to enrich the meaning of faith in their lives.<sup>72</sup> For example, a ritual for the dead can be prepared in a structured way by a healer to help a family unburden its grief. Through the ritual, surviving family members can share unresolved stories with the dead person to close their separated connection, without clinging to the past relationship which can prohibit surviving family members from living positive future lives. The ritual can also provide an opportunity for the rest of the family members to be reminded of life and death, and challenge the attitudes and values of life which will not continue forever.

Other forms of ritual, such as confession, can be very effective for healing people since these would provide a space for persons to resolve their issues not only emotionally, but also in the presence of God which will facilitate a different level of acceptance by people. A church also can provide programs for its members in a ritual form. For example, various rituals according to developmental stages can be provided to enrich people's lives. The rituals can ease people's anxiety in facing various life stages. It will help people to deal with developmental issues more creatively, in a non-anxious way while trusting in the power of God in the life journey, since they can name the cause for the

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<sup>72</sup> See Elaine Ramshaw, Ritual and Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) for a discussion of how ritual can be utilized for individual developmental crisis or sudden crisis and healing collectively.

problems they face. It can also lead people to reflect collectively on issues which will awaken people to the societal level of those issues, such as the educational system in Korea, women's issues, the social welfare system, and the condition of elders in present society. From this process of awareness, people can move to active participation in decision making at various levels of their lives. Korean people, particularly women, are not accustomed to participating in decision making in a hierarchical society, which causes them to have a negative, passive attitude toward life rather than attempting to participate in the process of changing the reality.

3. Understanding the group from a systemic perspective. As a shaman sees not only the individual, but always understands family or community dynamics, it is important for a healer in a Korean church community to see the dynamics of the whole family or community from the perspective of the system. Not only is the human community a group, but Korean culture values the family and the community. During the ritual, a shaman can criticize the systemic dysfunctions in a family and in society. This is the prophetic function of the shaman, but in most cases a shaman advises people to adjust to the system by emphasizing the existing ethical value of the society.

Therefore, a healer has to be conscientized in today's Korean church to function as a prophet. A healer has to help people to see the destructive attitudes and value systems in that society. Thus, it is necessary for pastors and pastoral counselors, as spiritual leaders, to know the individual family, church, society, and the world from a systemic perspective and not to be preoccupied with a segment of the problem instead of the whole system.

4. Growth groups for healing and empowerment. The group has played an important function in Christian church history. Jesus knew the power of group. He sent his disciples on group missions so they could support each other, and chose twelve disciples instead of one so that they would complement each other. The early primitive Christian community could survive, in spite of severe persecution, because of the supporting and empowering power of the group.

The Korean church can grow faster because of group activities. Small groups were especially effective for women in early Korean church history, and provided a new experience.<sup>73</sup> Women learned through class meetings, and they themselves became teachers for other women. This was a turning point for women who were not allowed to learn or to teach. Because of the Bible study taught in the vernacular language, Korean women tasted a sense of freedom and liberation from the oppression of the society and the country.

The group allows its member in a faith community to experience God's presence through relationships with other people, in addition to their relationships with God. In this way, person can learn to be alert to others' needs, and be free from a captive, self-centered life style. A person can experience the acceptance of God from experiencing the acceptance of the group. This can be a rebirth experience which allows one to live even for others. It is a change from the old pattern of a self-centered closed system to a new life. The group experience broadens one's understanding of life, faith, and spirituality.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, Korean women usually do not have public relationships other than with close friends or family members, and a church group can be an extended learning place through the relationships with others. Through group activity and support, members can begin to solve their problems through identification with the problems of others.

A person can build an identity through interaction. From this process, one can learn how to accept oneself and others which will also help a person to learn communicative and other social skills. The concept of boundary can be built, which will help women to have autonomy. The group is most important for Korean women's healing

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<sup>73</sup> Nam Ok Lee, Wesleyan Class Meeting: Its Relationship to Church Renewal and Growth, D. Min. project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1989 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1989), 44-50. See Philip A. Anderson, Church Meetings That Matter (New York: Pilgrim, 1987); and Philip Anderson and Phoebe Anderson, The House Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975).

<sup>74</sup> See Howard Clinebell, Growth Groups (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977); and Robert C. Leslie, Sharing Groups in the Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) for the practical methodologies.

because the Korean personality is group-centered, and Korean women tend to be absolved in relationships without having clear boundaries.

Group healing tends to be more effective for Korean women, as seen in shamanism. Women can be connected to other women, have a support system for growth, and also can be strengthened to overcome low self-esteem and a weak ego, without being confronted directly. Confrontation induces an enormous sense of shame which will work negatively for the empowerment of Korean women.

Thus, various growth, support groups for Korean church people, particularly for Korean women, can be a very effective ministry which will free the pastor and bring the concept of shared ministry into an authoritarian structure. If a leader is trained, various group counseling methods (such as Gestalt therapy) can be introduced in a self-support group to help Korean women gain better insights into their unconscious selves while clearly experiencing the present reality.

The group concept developed by Alcoholic Anonymous can also be utilized for the Korean church.<sup>75</sup> Spirituality for Korean people has the tendency to focus on mystic experiences. The modified 12 steps of AA can help people to live out their faith in concrete ways while deepening their spiritual communion with God. Further, the Korean church can expand its mission in the world by providing AA-type programs in a society where few helping professionals and institutions are available. Such programs can not only heal people, but can also provide a non-judgmental way of inviting nonbelievers into the world of God. Furthermore, the Korean church, which views drinking and smoking as sinful behavior, has to understand that these behavioral problems are addictive ones for which persons need help in order to recover. All addiction can be viewed as a spiritual problem, and the church has the responsibility to provide a spiritual value system for the

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<sup>75</sup> See Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1983). See also Howard Clinebell, Understanding and Counseling the Alcoholic (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968).

people who lose the meaning of life due to a spiritual vacuum. Moreover, the work of AA-type groups can help to free Korean women from the codependency of addictive relationships, and to develop a clearer understanding of God's intention for human life.

The most powerful dynamic of group, however, is that women can grow, be empowered and can transform themselves and their world. A group can be an agent of change for women and society. Through a group, women can effectively name the cause of their pain and problems, and also can effectively collect their power to change their reality.

5. Creative *nori* for healing Korean women's han. *Nori* is ecstatic joy in which a person can experience union with God. It is the moment of expanding oneself to the universe. It is the moment of sacred union which heals the brokenness. Therefore, *nori* is not just *nori* as joyful play but as ritual. But traditional Korean Christianity tends to value only pietistic religious practices, while disregarding playful activities except singing hymns.

Hence, the reintroduction of *nori* in the Korean Church which will facilitate people to release their suppressed feelings, experience union with God with joy, and empower people to have new energy for life. This can be an experience of freedom which also can be connected to conscientization and action in a non-violent way. As in the mask dance, the experience is humorous, and yet sharp enough to cut the contradiction. It also includes the warmth of human kindness which allows room for oppressors to change their attitude. The power released from the oppressed is strong enough to heal both oppressed and oppressor, from the personal level to the spiritual realm.<sup>76</sup> Thus, a church can provide various forms of *nori* which can be a creative way to heal broken relationships--relationships between every existence including nature and God.

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<sup>76</sup> Freire, 28.

6. Various practical ways of helping Korean women. Sharing stories, acting out dramas, writing journals, having visions, working on dreams, and imagining the inner power or image of a Goddess can enrich women's inner power, which will empower them to seek further change in their reality.<sup>77</sup> These methods are not innovative ones in any sense. They have been practiced by people throughout human history, and yet have been mostly forgotten since the world become more rationalistic and scientific. Nonetheless, conscious women in religious institutions and healing professions have searched and revitalized the wisdom embedded in human community and history.

Sharing stories, as discussed earlier, has been the oldest tradition which helps people to be connected, build an identity in a group, shape a value system, and gain insights of life. By sharing stories, people can consolidate their power and envision the world of the future through collaboration.

Acting out people's *han* will be an effective therapeutic method which can accelerate people's awareness and the process of identifying the problem, and people will gain wisdom from their lives collectively in a non-threatening way. The mask dance can be viewed as an acting out of people's collective *han*.

Visual activity has great impact on the human psyche, particularly for those who are intuitive. Women tend to be more intuitive, and more often women can trust their intuitions to gain the wisdom of life. It is not indulging in one's wishful image, but facilitating intuitive power for wholistic healing. Visioning oneself or the world according to one's vision will accelerate the process of growing to the state of being as one imagines.

Korean people, due to their world-view, tend to be more trusting of their dreams as compared to rationalistic Western people. Thus, working on dreams will be an effective,

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<sup>77</sup> See Hallie Iglehart, Womanspirit. This book illustrates the practical methodologies for empowering women through meditation, dreams, ritual, healing methods, etc., which can be revised and used for healing Korean women. There are other various examples by feminist healers which can be utilized for healing Korean women as well.



familiar tool for wholistic healing. It can be used as a guiding inner light for growth, and also as a window to the inner psychological world. Dreams will tell us the treasure of the soul hidden in our unconsciousness.

The image of God differs from person to person due to the complex process of forming the image. Providing people with only a limited image of God, such as a male Father, will inhibit the abundant healing power of God, since healing can occur only when the image is effective for one's internal world. For example, a woman who is abused by males in many ways cannot be healed effectively if she is offered only a male image of God from a religious institution. Presently, most Christian women learn only the image of a Father God, so it would be necessary for women to imagine God as power already existing in one's inner self or imagine a Goddess to empower them to identify with a female God.

Not only these methods illustrated in this study, women can further construct innovative ways of healing from their experiences. These methods will help Korean women to reexperience their *han*, name the causes, and use their collective power to transform their reality not just by fixing their problems superficially, but by looking into the roots of the problems.

7. Ritual for consciousness raising. As shown in community rituals, the Korean people's world-view is the yearning for the recovery of God's original relatedness and the ultimate harmony with all of creation. The society which perpetuates separatedness rather than relatedness will force creatures to live inertly unless there is a method for recovering harmony. Thus, rituals are structured in such a way so that people have an opportunity to vent their repressed feelings, thus enabling them to sustain their lives. What occurs is the confrontation of the ruling class by the oppressed for restoration of their humanity and relief from their pain. It is the earnest supplication for their right to human dignity. For this restoration, people create *nanjangpan* which means chaos without any rule. But it also symbolically means the presence of God's power for new creation--creation of new relatedness.

Only through union with God can people restore the brokenness. The traditional communal ritual also reveals the power of the oppressed, even though they appear weak and powerless. It is the power of God which enables them to live their lives fully. The collective power of the life force has the possibility of transforming a society which inhibits this force. Nonetheless, those communal rituals could not make connections simply by being repeated and by confronting a society which lacks conscientization. Such conditions will result in defeat of the oppressed as in *Pongsan Talchum*'s *miyal halmi*, when the woman dies.

Healing for Korean women's *han*, therefore, demands action and reflection: active participation in transforming and healing of the society and nature through various activities, and critical reflection on our present hurting society and creation including the methodology of action. Group rituals or group work will help Korean women to raise their consciousness, but the awareness has to converge as a collective power to transform the reality instead of adjusting to it once more. The consciousness raising group work has to focus on the critique of society and its oppression of women instead of on the traditional goal of analyzing women's inner psychological emotions. Awareness of the social structure frees women from their isolated feeling of inferiority. This awareness will enable them to name and value their experiences, while affirming each other and seeking inner freedom, as well as participating in transforming their external reality. The transformation of the society can be initiated only by the oppressed, which will free both the oppressed and the oppressors.<sup>78</sup> Paulo Freire articulates this well.

Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity, become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both. This is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape

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<sup>78</sup> See an example of Hispanic women's efforts toward an empowerment in Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Yolanda Tarango, *Hispanic Women* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 94-103.

by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, various rituals may be introduced for consciousness raising which will provide a space for women to know the problem within themselves and society, and this awareness will be connected to action. Conscientization and action for women's liberation from their *han* will transform society to regain its connectedness and move toward full humanity.

The question has been raised as to how a faith community can practically help its members to experience God's power for inner healing, which can be transformed to confront the dysfunctional society. The answer cannot be found in a fixed frame since this creative process has to be continued through a dialectic process between people and God. Nonetheless, the question may be raised whether the liturgy in the present Korean church, for example, has functioned as a healing tool which provides a space for people to encounter and have a personal relationship with God. Liturgy in Protestantism more often is structured in a rigid fashion with a solemn attitude. It focuses on God's authority to govern human beings with ultimate authority, instead of concentrating on enjoying God's love and the joyful human response to that love. Dancing and singing are honest expressions of human joy. Therefore, for the sake of Korean women and the whole Korean church community, liturgy could be reconstructed so that the Korean people can experience the presence of God through full participation in the process of encountering God. From this experience, people can envision the future of God and steer their life forces in that direction.

In addition to these examples, further creative efforts must be developed to help the healing of Korean women's *han* through constant, critical reflection. The important aim is to conscientize Korean women to transform their reality by converging their hidden powers to achieve the goals they desire. The goals have to emerge from their value of themselves,

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<sup>79</sup> Freire, 28

the meaning of life, their role in the society, their vision of the future, and the purpose of their lives in God. The journey to these goals also has to be defined by women as they help each other to reach those goals. The journey has to be the story written by Korean women themselves, not the story written for them. However, this journey should be guided by the spirit of God. It will be a new mode of existence compared to the present society, which is fundamentally rooted in violence. For the Korean people, particularly for Korean women, reconciliation is possible only through union with God and the reconstruction of all relationships in God's realm. Through encountering God, people can attempt to recreate the original ultimate harmony of God. Therefore, power from violence or direct physical confrontation will not abolish the problem, but will only entail the further segregation of people. In this sense, the Korean church has a tremendous responsibility to help not only individuals but also society as a whole to envision a new way of existence. That new existence will encourage all oppressed people to live freely in God's realm and in present society, just as Jesus' healing and proclamation of the word focused on the liberation of oppressed, alienated people in the society as well as in God's world.

### Conclusion

The shamanistic Korean world-view aims for wholistic harmony among existences within God's realm. In this world-view, God is always present in people's lives, but people also actively participate in the process of God's history by achieving full humanity through their lives in this world. To achieve full humanity, one needs to be fully human and enhance others' humanity. Thus, to culminate God's creative power in the world, a person needs to enhance other persons' creativity and humanity, since everyone exists in the nexus of internal connectedness.

This world-view shapes the communal nature of Korean people by providing an intrinsic value of wholeness, without denying individual authenticity. But this world-view also creates extreme pain when separation occurs due to various forces which block the lives of the people. Thus, Korean women suffer from the social structure which inhibits

their life forces from being fully used. The present societal structure is not only oppressive to women, but also to all human beings, nature, and even God due to its intrinsic oppositionalistic, separatist view of the world. The result is, *han* the painful emotion of Korean people, especially felt by Korean women. But, *han* is also the pain of the present world which has digressed too far from God's intention. *Han* is the groaning pain of the world and also of God. All creatures are groaning, and God is also mourning for the brokenness of the world.

*Han* exists for all levels of people: the oppressed and the oppressors. The *han* of the oppressors is the state of being alienated from other human beings, nature, and God, without knowing how to alter that mode of being. On the other hand, the oppressed carry a deeper *han* from their broken lives, a *han* caused by the violence of the oppressor. Nonetheless, the oppressed at least can discern where the violence originates and name the causes. Furthermore, because of their status at the bottom of the society, they are open to values which sustain the community and they become the bearers of those values. Thus, *han* contains both brokenness and hope for full humanity.

The absolute beauty of God is perceived by Korean people in the ultimate order and harmony among existences, which embraces both uniqueness and differences. The aim is for wholeness but not for uniformity. Acknowledging the inseparable connectedness of existences and acceptance of this relatedness opens the possibility in every creature to value others. The harmony emerging from this acceptance is the creative beauty which belongs to God. It is not just asking for oneness or for differences. *Han* is the sin against God by Korean people who do not exist in harmony within God's realm due to the broken, separated, existential mode of all creation. Thus, healing *han* is acknowledging every individual's difference. Healing for Korean women has to emerge not only from the transformation of both the collective and individual levels, but also from an inclusive value system which inherently contains both harmony and diversity.

*Hanpuri* is the process of liberation from the individual level to the collective, including the realm of God. In the process, a new life can emerge from the power of envisioning the future. It is the collective unconscious yearning of the Korean people to be one with others, nature, and God. While Korean people have been oppressed throughout their history, they also have created a way of resolving this pain. But the force of the system has not allowed Korean women and oppressed people to have enough energy to transform the reality. Thus, their collective effort is diminished.

*Hanpuri* has to be continued in Korean Christianity if the Korean church wants to be the witness of a God who frees both the oppressed and the oppressor from their *han*. Hence, it is the responsibility of the Korean Church to provide people with ways to experience the ultimate love of God which ultimately heals the wounds. Only the ultimate love of God has the ability to release *han*, and to empower people to achieve ultimate harmony through the transformation of both society and the individual.

## **Appendix**

### **Interview Questions**

1. What is your family background?
2. What is the turning point of your life?
3. What are the painful experiences?
4. What are the meaningful experiences?
5. How have you overcome the crises?
6. What are the strengths that have ensured your survival?
7. What are the resources, other than your own, that contribute to your survival?
8. Have religious ritual, community, or family system been helpful to overcome *han*??
9. What do you think is the most helpful healing method for you?
10. Are you a practicing member of any religion?
11. If you do practice a religion, how would you describe your belief or religious experience to others? In what way does it help you to live?
12. If you do not practice any religion, what is the most important value of your life?
13. How do you evaluate your life?
14. Do you have any *han*? If so, describe it.
16. How do you see yourself? In what words can you describe yourself?
17. If you could live again, what kind of change would you want to make?

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